Prachan: Music, Competition, and Conceptual Fighting in Thai Culture

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Abstract

This thesis is an examination of the traditional Thai music competition '*prachan*', mainly the *prachan piiphaat seephaa* which is the major arena of competition in traditional Thai music. The research focuses on the concept and process of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* with its changes and development in modern society and its reflection of Thai music and culture.

The thesis reveals the function and characteristics of *prachan*, which are predicated in the concept of musical interaction and response with the role of 'conceptual fighting' cooperating with symbolic cultural meaning as 'musical conflict'. The conceptual fighting approach clarifies the way in which the musicians respond to and overcome each other through their musical ideas in competition. This competition involves a range of musical and extra musical network. Four interactive approaches - interactive collaboration, conceptualisation, audience, and environments - reveal in depth the *prachan* framework. The process of *prachan* rehearsals and music lessons with the involvement of mythology reveals the musicians' perceptions of the *prachan* concept and process and the musicians' way of life.

Exploring *prachan* in modern Thai society shows the changes in and development of contemporary *prachan*. It illustrates how the musicians' relationships have been transformed in terms of music schools and institutions; how the present musical format of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* has contracted from the standard one; the changes and trends in *prachan* through the concept, form, *hua phleeng* and *haang phleeng* pieces, as well as the high-speed performance and the application of the *klong khaek* drums in competitions. The changes in music technology and media have had an enormous effect on both the *prachan* process and musicians' and audiences' perceptions of *prachan*.

Reflecting upon *prachan* in Thai music and culture shows that *prachan* and conceptual fighting are part of the cultural construction representing a culture of 'spontaneous response and fighting' as conflict in Thai music and society and in people's everyday lives. *Prachan* plays a significant part in the development process and creativity of Thai music and society through four paradigms. The concept of the contraction of time and space describes the relationships between *prachan* and culture in modern Thai society.

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Orthography, Conventions, and Anonymisation

The Romanisation of the Thai language in this thesis I have largely used the system of Deborah Wong. This is because I realise that Wong's system is reliable. It was adapted from the system of the Royal Thai Institute and also provides a clear distinction in Thai pronunciation between long and short vowels, which is very helpful for Thai readers (see Wong 2001:xxxi-xxxiv).

Actual names are beyond this system, since people have their own preferences in terms of Romanising their name and also some titles are spelled in a certain way in published sources and media. The titles of Thai royalty or nobility, for instance, *Luang*, *Phra*, *Phrayaa,* and so forth are in italics.

I have used people's names and the names of institutions, using anonymisation only where the person has requested this, in accordance with research ethics, and so as to avoid any further issues between musicians or musical schools in Thai music circles. I have replaced those names with an English capital letter.

In this thesis, when citing Thai sources, I have used both the Thai (Buddhist era) and Western (Anno Domini) year of publication. This is because Thailand acknowledges the Buddhist era calendar beginning in 543 B.C. Hence, throughout this thesis I cite the Thai sources by both the Thai and Western calendar year of publication, divided by a slash (/), for instance, Amatayakul (2528/1985) or Virurak (2539/1996).

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Chapter 1: Introduction

What is *Prachan*?

The importance of *prachan* in Thai musical performance and the possibility of conducting this research was first revealed to me through my own experience as a *prachan* musician. I tried, at first, to find a way to explain the word *prachan* '*ประชัน*' in terms of the English language, as the translation of technical terms is crucially important in order to understand the music of a different culture. More precisely, the translation must take account of the context of the original terms. Hence, in the case of *prachan*, I decided to use the word 'competition' to denote an activity or event in which people try to win something by establishing superiority or supremacy over each other.[1] This could be considered as a close equivalent to the term *prachan*. However, in the context of music, the term 'competition' has a different meaning in terms of cultural perception. The term 'music competition' in Western music generally means a public event where ensembles, soloists, etc. compete with their music in order to find a winner, and this results in the awarding of a prize. Such a competition involves a number of competitors and a process of elimination as well as a judgement by a jury or panel of judges. In contrast, in *prachan*, there is traditionally no official judgement and no declaration of a winner, and only two or three competitors but instead, a direct competition one-to-one, particularly in the formal form of the competition. In this research, I use the term 'music competition' to represent *prachan* but, in practice, the processes and characteristics of *prachan* are somewhat different from the Western model. Implicitly, in Thai musicians' perception, *prachan* is considered musical combat,

[1] Competition has been defined in several ways, for instance, 'as the activity or condition of striving to gain or win something by defeating or establishing superiority over others '(Oxford English Dictionary online. *Oxford Dictionaries: Language matters*, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com /definition/english/competition>), 'an organized event in which people try to win a prize by being the best, fastest' (Cambridge dictionaries online. Cambridge Dictionaries Online. < http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/competition?q= competition>).

which also relates to the rivalry among Thai music schools and circles. It might be said that the most fascinating aspect of *prachan* is the process of musical interaction and response. In this research, in order to reflect *prachan* and its significance in Thai culture, the term 'conceptual fighting' will be used to describe the concept of musical interaction and response as well as its relevance. By considering the *prachan* competition as a musical model, we can explore the significance of *prachan* in relation to different aspects of the questions of how music competition is created and developed, as well as how *prachan* and conflict work in Thai music circles and culture. This thesis aims to challenge the idea of what constitutes music competition and its cultural significance.

Prachan is a type of musical event unique to Thai music society which, from the past to the present, has played an important role in the changing process and development of traditional Thai Music. To music masters and adept musicians, it is perceived as a form of intense traditional stage competition requiring musicians to have remarkable proficiency and to be able to produce a spontaneous response to the music or pieces played by their opponents. A striking feature of *prachan* is that, traditionally, there is no judgment by a jury and no declaration of a winner but, in the musicians' perception, the audiences are indirectly the main agent of judgement. *Prachan piiphaat seephaa* (*ประชันปี่พาทย์เสภา*),[2] nevertheless, is perceived among *piiphaat*[3] (*ปี่พาทย์*) players as the most significant and intense competition. It is considered to be an intellectual arena where musicians are required to have a very high level of musical competence and knowledge. The musicians who take part in this competition are required to have remarkable proficiency in terms of their musical skills, techniques, and musical sense.

[2] *Seephaa* is a form of song recitation or chanting, called '*khap seephaa'* (*seephaa* chanting), based on the *seephaa* literature such as *seephaa Khunchaang Khunphaen*. It is also a form and structure of the *seephaa* repertoire for the *piiphaat* ensemble (called *piiphaat seephaa*) to accompany *seephaa* chanting and singing.

[3] *Piiphaat* is the type of traditional Thai music that accompanies ritual and dance-drama with a combination of Thai melodic percussion, rhythmic percussion and woodwind instruments.

Additionally, they should have a wide knowledge of, and an excellent memory for, the variety of pieces that are relevant to both the ensemble and solo categories in order to respond intelligently to each other on the stage. *Prachan piiphaat seephaa* has a prominent meaning for Thai musicians and a significant function in Thai musical society. It is accepted among Thai musicians as the intellectual arena of Thai music competitions. It is associated with rituals and ceremonies as well as musicians' way of life in Thai music culture. It is, evidently, the major *prachan* where Thai musicians and music masters display their musical proficiency, insightful knowledge, and masterpieces to other musicians and the public. Implicitly, it also has hidden elements of Thai history and socialization, and it illustrates the traditions of the Thai musical concept and culture. It might be said that *prachan* is one of the foundations of Thai musical knowledge.

Since *prachan piiphaat seephaa* has influenced Thai music development and played an important role in Thai society, it is necessary to study how it has developed in different ages**.** As a subject of ethnomusicology, in the contemporary period the changes in Thai society, in which Thai tradition and culture have been influenced by western and neighbouring countries as a result of increasing globalisation and the development of modern Thai society, are apparent in *prachan piiphaat seephaa*. It is important to study aspects such as the music evolution concept and format, rehearsal patterns, the relationship between masters and pupils and the way in which knowledge is passed on, musical styles and processes, including sponsorship, media presentation, and the appreciation of Thai music in Thai society. Furthermore, the fundamental concepts of Thai culture can be illustrated by this knowledge, which may make it possible to comprehend and explain Thai behaviour and musical society from the past to the present**.** It is therefore important to study this topic with a view to comprehending *prachan* and musical society with a greater degree of perception in Thai music and

culture. In this regard, in order to explain what constitutes music competition and its cultural significance, this research will embody the essentials of *prachan* music knowledge through the concept and process of conceptual fighting in *prachan*, and the way in which *prachan* and Thai society have developed in the modern world, all of which contribute to an explanation of Thai music and culture**.** This research will explore the following questions:

- How the concept and process of *prachan* works in Thai music circles
- How the process of *prachan* rehearsals, music lessons, and mythology work and are of significance in musicians' perceptions of *prachan*
- How and why *prachan piiphaat seephaa* has changed and continues to develop in modern Thai society,
- And, finally how it reflects and affects Thai music and culture.

Previous Work

So far, few books or articles have been written specifically about *prachan* competitions. In the book '*Luang Pradit Phairau* (*Sorn Silpabanleng*) *Maha Duriyakawee Loom Chao Phraya Hang Usa Khanae*' (*หลวงประดิษฐ์ไพเราะ (ศร ศิลปบรรเลง) มหาดุริยกวีลุ่มเจ้าพระยาแห่งอุษาคเนย์*) ('The Maestro of the Chao Phraya Basin') by Anant Narkkong and Asdavute Sagarik in 2001, there is clear evidence regarding *prachan* events that relates to the biography of *Luang* Pradit Phairau (Sorn Silpabanleng), who is regarded as a great maestro in Thai classical music. He is renowned and highly respected among Thai musicians as a great master and composer who was proficient in music skills and who had insightful knowledge of Thai music. He created a new technical style of performing on the *ranaat-eek* and composed several Thai classical music pieces that are valued among

Thai musicians at present. This book refers to the *prachan* events of *Luang* Pradit Phairau (*หลวงประดิษฐไพเราะ*) relating to the period of King Rama V (1868-1910) and King Rama VI (1910-1925). For example, in the 1900s, the formal *prachan* event between Wang Burapha (Burapha palace) and the Royal *Phinphaat* Directorate, the patronage of his highness Prince Panupun (Prince Burapha), was a significant *prachan* that gave the *Luang* Pradit Phairau its reputation. The Wang Burapha ensemble eventually won this competition since *Caangwaang* Sorn (*จางวางศร*) (who later became *Luang* Pradit Phairau), from the Wang Burapha ensemble, beat Cham (*แช่ม*) (*Phraya* Sanauduriyaang) from the Royal *Phinphaat* directorate ensemble in the *ranaat-eek* competition. He won with the piece *Choet* (*เชิด*) (a piece that shows the musical skills, speed, techniques, and strength of the musician), which formed the intellectual response between the two *ranaat-eek* (*ระนาดเอก*) players in this competition.

Similarly, the 1981 book '*Tunekramom Paribatra kup kandontrii*' (*ทูลกระหม่อมบริพัตรกับการดนตรี*) ('Prince Paribatra with Thai music') by Amatayakun describes a great formal *prachan* in the '*ngaan sii maseng'* (*งานสี่มะเส็ง*) event, held in the reign of Rama VI in 1923. It was a significant *prachan* to celebrate the birth anniversary of the four princes, Prince Boripatra, Prince Burachat Chaiyakara, Prince Pisamaipimolsat, and Prince Sasipongprapai, who were King Chulalongkorn's children. It was an extremely intense competition of *prachan-piiphaat-Seephaa* performed by three *piiphaat* ensembles that were patronised by the dynasty. It involved the *piiphaat* ensembles of Bangkunprom (*บางขุนพรหม*) palace and Burapa (*บูรพา*) palace as well as Jaopraya-Tammathikoranatipbody (*เจ้าพระยาธรรมาธิกรณาธิบดี*) (Amatayakun, 2524/1981: 49). This event was regarded as one of the largest and most significant *prachan* due to the reputation of the musical groups in the competition and the high level of musical competence of each musician. Arguably, this competition gave the musicians performing in it a reputation both in the past and

the present, as they experienced the most intense music competition. It can be said that this competition illustrates the authentic image of Thai culture in that period relating to the power of dynasty and its patronage of Thai classical music competitions.

As far as academic research is concerned, there is only one dissertation, by Dr. Pornprapit Phoasavadi at the University of Washington, that relates to *prachan*, called '*From Prachan to Prakuad: The process of Officializing Traditional Music Competition in Contemporary Bangkok*.' (2005). In her work, Dr. Phoasavadi explains the different definitions of *prachan* and *prakuad* and the fundamental process and concept of *prachan*, as well as criticizing the portrayal of *prachan* in the film '*โหมโรง*' (*Hom Rong*) or 'The Overture', the successful Thai classical music film of 2004. It could be said that, to a certain extent, her research provides significant knowledge of both formal and informal *prachan* competitions, along with some stories and history of *prachan*. For instance, she elucidates her experience regarding informal *prachan* in a *wai khruu* ritual (teacher homage ceremony) and also provides some data concerning the opinion of Thai music masters and musicians about *prachan* competitions. Moreover, Phoasavadi also illustrates the format of formal *prachan*, which traditionally requires the five pieces from the *seephaa* repertoire.[4] These consist of the *seephaa* overture (this piece is played according to each ensemble's choice and preparation), *Phmaa haa thaun* (*พม่าห้าท่อน*), *Carakheehangyaao* (*จรเข้หางยาว*), *Sii Bot* (*สี่บท*), and *Bulan* (*บุหลัน*). Apart from these pieces, an 'unlimited number of pieces [are played] as the ensembles continue to be in competition until the result is given' (Phoasavadi, 2005:96-97). Even though this dissertation provides knowledge of *prachan* competition, it places more emphasis on *prakuad* (*ประกวด*) (official Thai traditional music contests) than on *prachan*. It is surprising that there has never been any research focusing directly on *prachan* in detail,

[4] *Seephaa* repertoire in music competition normally is a group of pieces that uses Thai lyrics involved '*Seephaa Khunchaang Khunphaen*' (*เสภาขุนช้างขุนแผน*) poem or novel.

particularly *prachan piiphaat seephaa*, the main arena of *piiphaat* players, which is a symbol of a Thai musician's life and society.

As mentioned above, although there are a few books focusing on *prachan piiphaat seephaa*, there are more books that illustrate relevant evidence relating to *prachan* in general. For example, '*Sounding the Center: History and Aesthetics in Thai Buddhist Performance*', the work of Deborah Wong in 2001, demonstrates the auspicious Thai ceremony *wai khruu* (ไหว้ครู) (Thai teacher homage ceremony), which is of paramount importance in Thai classical music and influences the *prachan* event. In her ethnographic work, she describes her experience in two *wai khruu* ceremonies; at Wat Phra Phireen (or Phra Phireen temple) and Srinakarinwirot University-Prasanmit. It is intriguing that in this ceremony, Wong also refers to the *prachan* or '*piiphaat* competition', particularly at Wat Phra Phireen (วัดพระพิเรนทร์) (Wong 2001:28). She mentions that she participated in the *piiphaat* competition at night, which took place after the *wai khruu* ritual. By and large, the work of Wong is interesting in terms of representing the performance (both music and dance) of the Thai ritual and its implications, which reflect Thai society. However, she concentrates very much on the process of formal *wai khruu* and the musical performance, *piiphaat*, accompanying the *wai khruu* ritual through the sacred pieces. Even though she illustrates the performance of *piiphaat* music or court music in the ritual very well, she does not explain in much detail the other kinds of musical performance, such as *prachan* or *piiphaat* competitions, that are involved in the event after the proper formal ritual. Wong seems to deny that *prachan* is part of the *wai khruu* process. In this sense, I would argue that from the perspective of Thai musicians and audiences, the music competition is one of the significant parts of the *wai khruu* ceremony. Most Thai musicians are fully aware that they play music in order to show respect to the gods of music and the spirits of Thai music masters, as well as to display their musical capability to the public.

Apart from this, Wong raises a crucial point concerning the meaning of the *wai khruu* ritual. She states that the *wai khruu* is a social gathering that illustrates the social structure of Thai music (ibid:61). It takes place especially at the Wat Phra Phireen (Phra Phireen temple). This temple is regarded as a place of social congregation that brings together many musicians from different groups, places and contexts (ibid:61). She claims that the *wai khruu* ritual in this temple is a way for musicians from different lineages get to know and learn from each other through performance. In addition, she found that during the process of the *wai khruu* ritual at Wat Phra Phireen, a large number of people were in trance, possessed by deities, but she did not encounter this situation in any another place of ritual in her fieldwork (ibid:60). Arguably, this might be evidence that Wat Phra Phireen has a significant meaning to Thai musicians and people. It is a place of great respect and belief for the people, where the *wai khruu* ritual and *prachan* competition are held every year.

In her work, Pamela Myers-Moro gives relevant evidence relating to *prachan*. Myers-Moro published a book entitled '*Thai Music and Musicians in Contemporary Bangkok*' (1993). This book discusses Thai classical music from the view of the social organization of Thai musicians. It refers to the advantages of music competitions as a way to encourage musicians to work hard and practise, and to stimulate new compositions and variations of music (Myers-Moro 1993:120). This book also refers to the categories of Thai classical music pieces, so-called '*seephaa mahoorii*' (เสภามโหรี). It mentions the categories of *phleeng thao*, 'the expanding-contracting tripartite musical form' (ibid:60), which is quite popular among Thai musicians and audiences. Traditionally, musicians usually apply the pieces from this repertoire in a set structure in music competitions including *Hoomroong Paamaahaaton* (โหมโรงพม่าห้าท่อน), *Carakhee hang jaw* (จระเข้หางยาว), *Siibot* (สี่บท), *Bulan* (บุหลัน), any pieces from the '*seephaa mahoorii category*', *phleeng diaw* (เพลงเดี่ยว) and *phleeng laa* (เพลงลา) (ibid:60-62). Interestingly, it

seems to be that Myers-Moro tries to explain that the pieces from the *seephaa mahoorii* repertoire can be applied directly to the set structure or the fundamental structure of Thai music competitions. She also shows how the structure of performance in music competitions at present is truncated and how only the overture, a *phleeng diaw* (a solo piece) and then the closing *phleeng laa* (the farewell piece) are played. Additionally, Myers-Moro describes the relationship between teachers and students as well as the transmission of Thai music knowledge. Intriguingly, she refers to the Thai word '*huang*' (*หวง*) (1993:117), meaning guarding or maintaining knowledge in Thai classical music, particularly in intense music competitions.

Historical Dimension

Prachan is viewed among musicians and music masters as a form of traditional music competition relating to their professional life in Thai music circles. By and large, *prachan* can be classified into three categories: *prachan piiphaat naanghoong* (*ประชันปี่พาทย์นางหงส์*), *prachan piiphaat mon* (*ประชันปี่พาทย์มอญ*), and *prachan piiphaat seephaa* (*ประชันปี่พาทย์เสภา*), which is traditionally associated with auspicious Thai ceremonies and funerals. Each category can be identified through the form of ensemble, content of the songs and meaning, performance procedure, and style involved with the concept of musical response. *Prachan* traditionally takes place in either a formal or an informal setting. Formal *prachan* refers to a pre-arranged music competition, whereas an informal one signifies a *prachan* that it is not planned in advance, and where the competitors are not notified of the song list in the performance of each ensemble. A *prachan* usually lasts for a whole night, and can occasionally extend over several nights. *Prachan piipaat seephaa*, nevertheless, is perceived amongst *piiphaat* players as the

most significant competition, requiring musicians to have a high level of musical competence and knowledge to be able to respond with music on the stage.

Piiphaat seephaa or *prachan piiphaat seephaa* is said to have been originally created and performed in the palace through the patronage of the dynasty. It is evidently based on the form and structure of the *seephaa* repertoire for the *piiphaat* ensemble. This repertoire, which is widely known among *piiphaat* players, is called *phleeng* (*prapeet*) *seephaa* (*เพลงเสภา หรือ เพลงประเภทเสภา*). This form of *piiphaat seephaa***,** arguably**,** originally developed from *seephaa* chanting.[5] Historically, in the reign of King Rama II (1809-1824), a *piiphaat* ensemble was first used to accompany *seephaa* chanting to illustrate the narrative action (*naa phaat หน้าพาทย์*) of each character in the story (Swangviboonpong 2003:5). The most popular *seephaa* literature was *seephaa Khunchaang Khunphaen* (*เสภาขุนช้างขุนแผน*). Then, when *seephaa* chanting developed with the story of *Khunchaang Khunphaen* into alternating chanting and songs, the *piiphaat seephaa* ensemble[6] also adapted to accompany only the singing. Later, since *piiphaat seephaa* performance was held in high esteem in Siamese (Thai) musical society, it became very difficult to find a *seephaa* chanter. Therefore only the singing component of *seephaa* performance remained with the accompaniment of a *phiiphaat seephaa* ensemble. In the reign of King Rama IV (1851-1868), four main *seephaa* pieces at the *saam chan* metrical level were created by the great music masters for the performance of *piiphaat seephaa* ensemble, including *Phma Haathon*, *Cholakae Haangyaao, Siibot,* and *Bulan*. Hence, the format of *piiphaat seepha* performance with singing developed to

[5] A *seephaa* chanter usually chants a story from specific literature with *krab seephaa* (a pair of wooden blocks)
[6] A *Piiphaat seephaa* ensemble is a type of *piiphaat* ensemble that is generally in the form of a *piiphaat seephaa khrung khoo* ensemble. *Piiphaat seephaa khrung khoo* comprises a *pii nai* (quadruple-reed oboe), a *ranaat eek* (treble xylophone), a *ranaat thum* (bass xylophone), a *khong wong yai* (large gong circle), a *khong wong lek* (small gong circle), a *saung naa* (cylindrical double-headed drum), a *ching* (a pair of small cymbals), a *chaap* (a pair of flat cymbals), and a *krub* (a pair of hard wood sticks).

consist of *Rao Pralong Seephaa* (รัวประลองเสภา) and *hoomroong*[7] (โหมโรง) (overture), *Phma Haathon, Cholakae Haangyaao, Siibot, Bulan,* and *phleeng laa* (farewell). These pieces are considered as the pieces from the three main repertoires of *piiphaat seephaa* performance, including *hoomroong*, the four main *seephaa*, and *phleeng laa*. However, this format was developed for the *prachan* with the support of the royal family when they arranged a *prachan* competition at the palace.[8] Then, the *tayoe* (ทยอย) and *diaw* (เดี่ยว) repertoires, known as *phleeng tayoe*[9] and *phleeng diaw*,[10] were added after the four main *seephaa* pieces to increase the tension of the competition.[11] This kind of *prachan* format is widely regarded among Thai music circles as an intense and standard *prachan*.

Prachan piiphaat seephaa, arguably, was created to satisfy the Thai dynasty. The music competition was used as a game or fashion among the upper classes. It was fashionable from around the period of King Rama IV (1851-1868) to that of King Rama VII (1925-1935); if a nobleman had his own great music ensemble in his palace or house, he was thought to have great dignity or prosperity. Therefore, *prachan piiphaat seephaa* were arranged for several different events to serve as their entertainment and to demonstrate their status. It could be said that that period was a golden age of *prachan* and Thai music when *prachan* was held in high esteem by both the Thai dynasty and people in society. At that time most adept musicians and great music masters from rural areas were brought to the palace to serve the dynasty or noblemen as great musicians in their ensembles. During that period Thai music masters or musicians were promoted to

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[7] In *prachan piiphaat seephaa*, the *hoomroong* piece is also perceived as the *hoomroong seephaa*. *Hoomroong seephaa* can be separated into two parts comprising the *Rao Pralong Seephaa* and the *hoomroong*. *Prachan* musicians traditionally consider the *Rao Pralong Seephaa* as an introduction in order to warm up and check the readiness and quality of their musical instruments, while the *hoomroong* piece or the overture is viewed as the substance of the prelude (ending with the end of the *wa* piece) before starting the next piece.

[8] Chaiya Thangmisi, interview 2013.

[9] *Phleeng tayoe* or *tayoe* is known as both a type of musical repertoire and musical pieces. The pieces in this category are made up of '*nua*' (a main melody that is fixed in length) in alternation with '*yoon*' (a melody that oscillates unequally around one note), melodies which are fundamentally accompanied by the *naa thap saung maai* or *saung maai* rhythmic pattern.

[10] *Phleeng diaw* or *diaw* is known as both the solo repertoire and solo pieces. Musicians usually use a piece from this category to challenge and show their musical proficiency in *prachan*.

[11] Chaiya Thangmisi, interview 2013.

bandasak (*บรรดาศักดิ์*), the title of nobility, as lords having a high rank in Thai society. This symbolized their great musical proficiency in performances and compositions. Musicians who were given this honour include: *Phraya* Prasaan Duriyasap (Plaek Prasaansap) (*พระยาประสานดุริยศัพท์ (แปลก ประสานศัพท์)*) (1860-1925), *Phraya* Sanauduriyaang (Cham Suntharawaathin) (*พระยาเสนาะดุริยางค์ (แช่ม สุนทรวาทิน)*) (1866-1949), *Luang* Pradit Phairau (Sorn Silapabanleng) (*หลวงประดิษฐไพเราะ (ศร ศิลปบรรเลง)*) (1881-1954) and so forth.

In historical *prachan* events, in Thai musicians' perception, there is obvious evidence about a great *prachan* event in the reign of King Rama VI (1910-1925) called '*ngaan sii maseng*' in 1923 at Baang Khunphrom palace. This was an intense *prachan piiphaa seephaa* to celebrate the birthdays of the four princes: Prince Boripatra, Prince Burachat Chaiyakara, Prince Pisamaipimolsat, and Prince Sasipongprapai, who were King Chulalongkorn's children (Princess Siriratbusabong and Amatayakul 2524/1981:49-52). It was a *prachan* competition between three palace ensembles: the Baang Khunphrom (*บางขุนพรหม*), the Burapapirom (*บูรพาภิรมย์*), and the *Cao Phraya* Dhamaadhikaranaadhibadii (*เจ้าพระยาธรรมาธิกรณาธิบดี*), led by masters *Caangwaang* Thua Paattayakoson (*จางวางทั่ว พาทยโกศล*), *Caangwaang* Sorn Silapabanleng (*จางวางศร ศิลปบรรเลง*) (later became *Luang* Pradit Phairau), and *Phraya* Sanauduriyaang (Chaam Suntharawaathin) (ibid:49). Likewise, in 1930, in the reign of King Rama VII (1925-1935), there was a great *prachan* at Ladawan (*ลดาวัลย์*) palace, to celebrate the forty-eighth birthday of HRH Prince Yugaka Dughambara, Prince of Lopburi (ibid:52). It was a great *prachan* event between three palace ensembles: Baang Khunphrom, Ladawan, and the King's Loyal, led by *Caangwaang* Thua Paattayakoson, *Luang* Pradit Phairau (Sorn Silapabanleng), and *Phra* Phleeng Phairoh (Soom Suwathit), respectively (Phoasavadi 2005:91). These two events are considered to be great *prachans* because of their intense musical format; also, each ensemble was patronised by the royal family.

After the change in the Thai political system in 1932, from absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy under a system of parliamentary democracy, *prachan piiphaat seephaa* became highly esteemed among musicians in Thai society. The abolition of absolute monarchy meant that most music masters and musicians had to leave the palace and move to different areas in Thailand to make their living. In 1933 and 1934, the Fine Arts Department of Thailand (Krom Silpakorn (*กรมศิลปากร*)) and the School of Dramatic Arts and Music (Rong-rian Naattaduriyaangkhasaat (*โรงเรียนนาฏดุริยางคศาสตร์*))[12] were established in order to preserve Thai arts and culture (Rutnin 1996:189). At that time, Thai musicians and dancers (*khoon*, drama, etc.) from the Department of Entertainment (Krom Mahoorasop (*กรมมหรสพ*)) and Department of Piiphaat and Khoon Luang (Krom Piiphaat lae Khoon luang (*กรมปี่พาทย์และโขนหลวง*)) under the Royal Household were transferred and became affiliated with the Fine Arts Department of Thailand. After 1932, official institutions such as the four military services tried to find adept musicians to become affiliates of the music departments of their institutions. However, at that time most musicians also supported themselves as full-time musicians by performing music and *prachan* in Thai music circles as their way of life. Hence, in that period, there were many music masters and adept musicians who had been educated and worked under the Royal Household. They were affiliated to institutions but they lived and established their own music ensembles and schools in Bangkok, its suburbs, and other provinces. Arguably, since there were a number of *piiphaat* ensembles in Thai music circles, this caused *prachan piiphaat seephaa* to become valued and highly competitive in Thai music circles. It was recognized among people as an intense competition relating to the symbol of the dynasty or upper classes and also as part of people's lives.

[12] The name of the school has been changed several times from Rong-rian Naattaduriyaangkhasaat to Rong-rian Silapakon (*โรงเรียนศิลปากร*), to Rong-rian Sang-kiitsin (*โรงเรียนสังคีตศิลป์*) in 1942, and to Rong-rian Naattasin (*โรงเรียนนาฏศิลป์*) in 1945 (Rutin 1996:272). In 1973, the name was changed to Wittayalai Naattasin (*วิทยาลัยนาฏศิลป์*) (College of Dramatic Arts).

After World War II (1939-1945), several *prachan* events took place in Thai society to respond to the demands of the people. This period could be considered to be one of the golden ages of Thai music when *prachan* was highly esteemed among musicians in Thai music circles. Since 1970, Wat Phra Phireen has been regarded as a prestigious place of *prachan piiphaat seephaa*, founded by Prof. Dr. Utit Narksawat, the first president of the *Samakom-Songkroe-Sahaaysilpin,* (*สมาคมสงเคราะห์สหายศิลปิน*) (the Association for Assistance to Friends and Performers) and a great supporter of Thai classical music and *prachan* competitions. The *Prachan* at Wat Phra Phireen in 1975 between two renowned ensembles, the Pluuam-priichaa (*ปลื้มปรีชา*) and the Hualamphong (*หัวลำโพง*) ensembles, is perceived amongst *prachan* musicians as a legendary *prachan* in Thai music circles, as it was a competition between two famous *ranaat eek* players - Somnuk Sornpraphan and Kamon Pluuam-priichaa. Those ensembles also comprised pupils of two famous music masters, *Khruu* Somphop Khampraseot and *Khruu* Prasit Thawon, who were great musicians from the *Luang* Pradit Phairau music school. It was an intense *prachan* with a formal judgment by a jury. Unpredictably this led to a conflict between the ensembles that caused the judges to refrain from giving a formal judgement in later *prachans* at this temple.

Likewise, *prachan* Sua Singh Krathing Raet (*เสือ สิงห์ กระทิง แรด*),[13] part of the 11th Dontrii Thai Phannana (*ดนตรีไทยพรรณนา*) programme in 1980 at the Thai National Theatre, led by master Seerii Hwangnaitham, is considered as one of the great *prachan* events, since it was a *prachan* between four famous ensembles in Thai music circles: the Suphot Tosa-nga, Suradeet Kimpiiam, Phat Buathung, and Meethaa Hmuuyen ensembles (Amatayakul et al. 2550/2007:726). Evidently, it was also viewed as a

[13] Sua Singh Krathing Raet (literally meaning tiger, leo, gaur, and rhinoceros) was part of the 11th Dontree Thai Phannana programme, hosted by the Fine Arts Department of Thailand (Krom Silpakorn) on 18 October 2523/1980 at the Thai National Theatre, Bangkok.

prachan between four great *ranaat eek* player [14] from famous musical schools. Significantly, this *prachan* also represented the legend of *Khruu* Boonyung Gatekong (Thai National Artist 2534/1991), from the Suphot Tosa-nga ensemble, who was over the age of fifty years old. He made his name in this competition by showing his virtuoso spontaneous musical response to others through his masterly creativity and improvisation in the *ranaat thum* performance. [15] Evidently, many famous *prachan* events were held at Wat Phra Phireen and the Thai National Theatre during that period. Hence, Wat Phra Phireen and the Thai National Theatre are recognized amongst musicians as central and prestigious places for great *prachan piiphaat seephaa* in Thai music circles from the middle to the end of the twentieth century.

Apart from these legendary *prachans*, there was a significant *prachan* event in 1985 called *ngaan prachan piiphaat naa phratiinang* (*งานประชันปี่พาทย์หน้าพระที่นั่ง*). It was a significant *prachan piiphaat seephaa* presented to Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, known as Princess Sirindhorn, at Mahidol University, Bangkok. This *prachan* was arranged, since *prachan* dedicated to the Thai king and dynasty had not taken place for forty-five years following the Thai revolution and the end of Thai absolute monarchy in 1932. [16] It was a great *prachan* between Baan Baangkapi (Baangkapi house) and Baan Baang-lampu (Baang-lampu house), the two famous *prachan* ensembles at that time, led by Pinit Chaisuwan (Thai National Artist 2540/1997) and Somchay Duriyapraniit, the two great *prachan* music masters from the Social Welfare Department of Bangkok and Duriyapraniit music school, respectively. This *prachan* was an intense *prachan* since it was a form of competition where the same pieces were used to represent the musicians' musical proficiency, including *Kraao Nai* (*กราวใน*), one of the main and high level solo pieces of Thai music. Implicitly, this

[14] Their names are used as the names of ensembles in *prachan*,
[15] Sirichaicharn Fachamroon, Thai National Artist 2557/2014, interview, the College of Dramatic Art, Bangkok, 8/5/2013.
[16] The last *prachan* before the end of Thai absolute monarchy was at Laddawan palace and was arranged by His Royal Highness Krommaluang Lopburi Ramet in 2473/1930

prachan was arranged to conserve the tradition of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* performed in front of the royal family (Amatayakul 2528/1985:4-5).

It might be said that Thai institutions became the main supporters of Thai musicians and significant *prachan* events. For instance, in 1992, Thurakit Bundit University hosted a famous *prachan piiphaat seephaa*, called *Piiphaat Prachanwong Chalermphrakeit Somdejphranaangchao Phrab36arom-rashiniinaat* (*ปี่พาทย์ประชันวงเฉลิมพระเกียรติสมเด็จพระนางเจ้าพระบรมราชินีนาถ*) (*prachan piiphaat* glorification for the sixtieth anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit). This was a significant *prachan* since it featured two pairs of famous music ensembles. In particular, it involved two renowned ensembles, the Khana Sit-Suphot Toesa-nga (*คณะศิษย์สุพจน์ โตสง่า*) and Khana Naai Somnuek Sornprapun (*คณะนายสมนึก ศรประพันธ์*), with the representation of two famous musicians, Somnuk Sornpraphan and Chaiyuth Tosa-nga, the two legendary *ranaat eek* players in Thai music circles of that period. Both ensembles demonstrated their musical competence and wisdom through *prachan* pieces comprising a solo piece, A-hia (*อาเฮีย*), one of the high level solo pieces of Thai music, which gained a big applause from the audience.

Similarly, in 1999, the Matichon newspaper and Silapakorn University hosted a *prachan* between three famous *prachan* ensembles, *Piiphaat Chaat Siam* (*ปีพาทย์ชาติสยาม*) at Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre. The three famous *prachan* ensembles were Baan Baangkapi (*บ้านบางกะปิ*), Baan Baangyai (*บ้านบางใหญ่*), and Baan Somerong (*บ้านสำโรง*), and it was also a competition between three great *ranaat eek* players, Danai Mungyaioyaa, Chaichana Taeaoun, and Somreauk Chaysaeng. From the second half of the twentieth century to the twenty-first century, arguably, there has been a significant change and movement in *prachan* and Thai music. The Asian financial crisis in 1997 resulted in a large number of musicians becoming unemployed, which

affected the *prachan* musicians' way of life. Significantly, the development of modern Thai society, by means of the influx of western or foreign culture and music, technology and media, as well as the increase in the number of Thai institutions and new audiences, have impacted on the existence of *prachan* music and its changes in relation to Thai culture. Nowadays, *prachan piiphaat seephaa* are largely held at Thai institutions and Thai temples as part of *wai khruu* or Thai teacher homage ceremonies, such as the *prachan* at Wat Phra Phireen, Wat Paa Thamma-soophon, Wat Pigun-ngon, and Wat Changthaung.

Theoretical Framework

In this section, I will demonstrate the theoretical concepts that can be applied to research on Thai traditional music competitions, *prachan*. Particularly relevant concepts are musicking, interactive networks, rituals, and theatre as a cultural performance.

Through the concept of musicking, Christopher Small (1998) provides a framework to understand musical meaning and the way in which music is perceived. His famous phrase, 'No such thing as music**'** (Small 1998:3) alludes to the fact that there is a different perspective of music, as human activity, which goes beyond its superficial meaning. He states that we normally think that music is a thing, but in fact it relies on abstract thinking, comparable to love and hate, in order to explain its meaning (ibid:2)**.** With respect to the western notion of music, he claims that people tend to think that the word 'music' equates to the work of music (ibid:3). So, musical performance is of paramount importance as a way to present musical work and its meaning. In this sense, he states that it is an idea that stems from the west that tries to establish the existence of music through the performance of musicians**.** However, in fact, the performance itself does not create the meaning of music or musical work; rather, it

is the performative act and the relationship with other performances that provide the musical meaning.

Small introduces musicking theory by means of relationships. He does not end this theory with a single performance, but expands the relationships from one performance to others (ibid:209). This is the concept of reciprocal relationships, which relates to widening our understanding of music through the relationships and responses of people participating in musical events. The response or participation of people in a musical event affects our own response to the performance of the musicians. The shared moment of musical experience creates a bond and relationship with other people, particularly when we have a similar response such as enjoyment (ibid:210). In this sense, musicking is crucially important to the way in which relationships are created among the audience at a musical event. Arguably, the striking point of music is the way in which people participate and respond to each other. This is what Small terms the way of musical activity, or musicking.

Musicking takes musical performance into account within the context of a physical and social setting. Therefore, the meaning of a musical work or performance has an influence on the meaning of the event. The pieces performed, and the sound of the music, are important, yet they do not constitute the whole of the event. In practice, 'there is no such thing as a musical work'; there are only the activities of the event such as singing, playing, listening and dancing, among others (ibid:11). In this sense, without musical activities and the relationships created at the musical event, the musical work as such does not exist. As mentioned above, musicking as a human activity takes place whenever sets of relationships are created (ibid:13). Its meaning derives not only from the set of relationships between the musicians who organise the sound (the performers) and the audience who respond, but from everybody who participates in the musical performance. Broadly speaking, it is the relationship between persons, the individual

and society, humanity and the natural world, or even the supernatural (ibid:13). Following this kind of concept, the fundamental notion of musicking implies the activities of a large range of people involved in a musical performance: performers, listeners, composers, ticket collectors, producers, those who move large instruments (such as pianos or drums), cleaners, roadies, dancers and so forth (ibid:10). In other words, all of the activities that happen around a musical event are musicking. As mentioned above, the concept of musicking mainly focuses on the participation of human beings. This gives rise to the definition of music, which in practice has a rather social connotation rather than focusing on the individual. Indeed, social meaning is fundamental to an understanding of music. As Small (ibid:7) argues, the meaning and beauty of music are created when people take part together.

The musicking theory can be applied to the present research as a new way of interpreting and questioning the concept of *prachan*. For instance, the term for 'performance' in Thai language is *Karn Sadang*. *Karn Sadang*, or performance at an event, means an action or performance such as that by musicians. The habitual definition of music in Thailand merely refers to the performance of musicians organizing sound. The music competition *prachan* is a performance that is highly appreciated by Thai people due to the performance of the musicians. This perception differs from Small's musicking theory. Taking into account Small's approach to music as the way in which human beings participate in all music related activities, and the relationship the musical event creates, we can re-examine the Thai concept of *prachan*. Is it possible to explain *prachan* by means of the activities and behaviour of the people at the event?

The notion of musicking provides a theoretical framework for understanding *prachan*. An interesting example is the lively *prachan* or music competition at Wat Phra Phireen in Thailand. Musicking applied to this competition could shed light on the

question of whether the number of people attending the event, their participation and experiences, such as cheering and clapping for their favourite musicians, affects the relationships created and the way in which the musicians perform. Likewise, it is very interesting to analyse how the sound engineering undertaken for each ensemble during the music competition affects not only the sound quality of the performance but also the way in which the musicians and people hear and perceive the music. The same applies to the staff who take care of the audience and musicians, or the seemingly most minor activities, such as adjusting a microphone for the music competition and so on. Do these diverse duties influence the sound of the music and the action or response of the audience? We can assume that all activities involved in a *prachan* exert a particular influence on the meaning of the creation of music. The activities and interactions of the people related to the event are part of the music competition or musical event and its meaning. Following this concept, the musicking approach is particularly relevant as it helps to shape our understanding of the process of learning or creating music and of the relationships between the musicians, audience, staff, and sound engineers, which is currently underestimated in the approaches towards *prachan*. Following Small's approach, we might be able to approach the study of Thai music competitions with a distinctly social focus rather than mere considering individual performances.

The interactive network is one of the theoretical concepts of ethnomusicologist Benjamin Brinner and bears some resemblance to Small's approach. In his book 'Knowing music, making music; Javanese Gamelan and the theory of musical competence and interaction' (1995), he too emphasises the importance of interaction, and in particular he looks at the interactive processes between the musicians within a musical ensemble. From his perspective, 'musical interaction is a human activity,' which is why musicians should consider their role in the ensemble as one part of an interactive network (ibid:170). The interactive network is the set of relationships that

disperses among the musicians and the musical domain in which the musicians express themselves (ibid:170).

The interactive network underlines the role of the musicians and the relationships and further carves out uncertainty in the structuring of the role and relationships between the leader and their followers. As for the role or individual roles of musicians, according to Brinner, the interactive network illustrates the role of the leader and their followers in an ensemble where the leader is in need of supporters. Brinner suggests that the significance of followers or non-leading instruments is the same as the leading instrumentalist in a musical ensemble. He claims that, even though the role of the leader indeed implies that others adopt the role of followers, it might be an inappropriate term in other contexts (ibid:173). The follower can, in fact, interact with the leader without following them. Moreover, in some contexts, there is no actual difference in musical competence, in cases where the musicians fulfil the performance together on an equal level (ibid:173-174). Hence, Brinner underlines the equal value and competence of the role of the leader and the follower instrumentalists. He provides examples to illustrate his perspective. He points out that in north Indian ensembles, the drummer accompanies the melody of the solo instruments (ibid:173), supporting the soloist's melody by providing a suitable metre or rhythmic pattern as required by the soloist for their improvisation. Despite this supportive function, the drummer is free to create and fill the metric framework for the composition. Yet, the duty of the drummer is to complement the melody rather than to subordinate the soloist (ibid:174). Similarly, in the case of a vocal performance, the instrumentalist who accompanies the vocalist's melody adopts a complementary role rather than being a mere follower (ibid:174).

An interactive network can also be interpreted through 'the [uncertain] relationships between the members of an ensemble and the musical domain' (ibid.175). In this sense, we should look at the interactive network as a whole rather than the

fragments of individual interaction. Brinner claims that the relationships between the leader and their followers and their roles may change depending on the situation in the performance (ibid.175). For instance, with respect to the relationship between a conductor and the members of an orchestra, the members of the orchestra accept the leadership of the conductor (ibid.175). Nevertheless, in a situation in which they adopt the role of accompanying a soloist, a new relationship is created because the conductor is no longer the main authority - they must follow the soloist instead (ibid.175). This shows that the structure of the interactive network consists of roles, relationships and domains. This gives rise to an understanding of the form of interactive network, imitation and influence, and the pattern of musical interaction.

Furthermore, the interactive network is related to a hierarchical structure associated with cues (signals) and control. The decision-making process in a performance can take place in two ways, top down or bottom up (ibid:176). In other words, the leader, or the person at the top of the hierarchy, can guide and control other players to perform correctly, whereas the followers, at the bottom of the hierarchy, can give cues and in turn control the leader as well. The control or performance decision can come from the followers or the supporters as much as from the leader. For instance, musician A (leader) guides and controls musician B to play while B has no direct control over A, but can constrain A by giving cues in a certain time (ibid:177). Brinner also claims that the relationship and control between the leader and their followers is common in several cultures (ibid:178). In addition, in order to understand an interactive network, we should consider the structure in which 'roles and relationships are played out' (ibid:180). Arguably, a change of leadership in an ensemble or 'multiple leaders in a different domain' is a way of communication through which we can understand the hierarchy, control, function, network and communication within the group or ensemble (ibid:180). The understanding of these aspects enables us to see the process and full

picture of a performance (ibid:180). Brinner provides examples of a North Indian chamber group and an Arab *takht,* which are very distinct in their interactive network. These are ensembles of traditional music. The most striking feature is that the value of these two ensembles derives from the way in which the performers relate to the change of leadership or the multiple leaders in different circumstances (ibid:180).

The interactive concept can also be applied to *prachan*, particularly to *prachan piiphaat seephaa*, in terms of explaining the performance as a way of creating an interactive network, and the relationships between the musicians within the ensemble during their performance. In *prachan piiphaat seephaa* competitions, the performance of each ensemble is traditionally the way in which the musicians interact with each other by means of their role in performance and improvisation. For instance, in the *piiphaat* ensemble, the *ranaat eek* (ระนาดเอก) (treble xylophone) player is the leader of the musicians. He has a leading duty to make it possible for the other instruments to respond to the melodies in the responding section. Importantly, he gives cues to the other musicians to follow him by increasing or decreasing the tempo and changing the dynamics. In contrast, the *khong wong yai* (ฆ้องวงใหญ่) (large gong circle), the *khong wong lek* (ฆ้องวงเล็ก) (small gong circle), the *taphoon* (ตะโพน) (double-headed horizontal drum) and the *ching* (ฉิ่ง) (a pair of small cymbals) players have a duty to follow and support the leader both in the moment of changing the tempo and in the section of improvisation. Furthermore, the *ranaat thum* (ระนาดทุ้ม) (bass xylophone), and the *pii nai* (ปี่ใน) (quadruple-reed oboe) players usually interact with the *ranaat eek* player and the other musicians in the ensemble; the *ranaat thum* usually mimics and disrupts the *ranaat eek* melodies, while the *pii nai* usually plays with the others by imitating and playing the melodies and styles of the other instruments. Following this kind of concept, we can see that the performance of the musicians in *prachan* competitions is a means of

creating interactive networks through the roles of the leader and the followers within the ensemble. In practice, this also means that the roles of the leader and followers (or the hierarchical structure) are equal, since the control (cue) and performance decisions come from the followers or supporters as much as from the leader. Arguably, each role needs a corresponding response from the other. From this perspective, this might lead to a new way of explaining *prachan* performances by revealing the intellectual processes that take place in Thai music competitions as a way for the musicians to communicate musically with each other within the ensemble and during the performance.

Victor Turner provides us with yet another viewpoint that helps to understand the *prachan* music competition. In 'From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play' (1982), Turner points out that the performance of ritual and theatre is a way of representing the reality of people's lives. Moreover, it contributes to people's awareness that ritual and theatre as a cultural performance stands in close relation to human social life.

Turner claims that ritual is one of the social processes in which people change their internal condition (in terms of mind processes) to absorb the external environment of a social and cultural type through the process of the ritual (Turner 1982:21-22). Usually it is a ritual symbol that becomes a significant factor representing social action. The striking feature of the ritual is liminality, which is the way in which human identity is developed within the ambiguity of social structure (ibid: 46) and it implies both creative and destructive aspects. In tribal societies, liminality refers to work or activity within a particular performance at the most significant stage of the ritual (ibid:52). Furthermore, Turner states that the ritual liminality is 'a play of meaning' of symbols associated with a hierarchical value order and social status (ibid:85). In tribal and agrarian cultures, the power of ritual liminality serves to maintain a certain social order (ibid:85). However, ritual liminality also implies cultural innovation and reflects the way in which social structures and statuses transform over time. Turner invokes the

term ‘liminal period’ to denote the transformation of the form from one social state and status to another. As examples he names the liminal periods of birth, marriage and death. (ibid:113). In other words, a liminal period is the time and space that mediates between one context of meaning (and action) and another. Arguably, the significant feature of the liminal period is its ambiguity and at times inconsistent meaning (ibid:113).

Turner also elucidates the different meanings of liminal and liminoid phenomena in a complex society. He points out that the liminal is similar to a kind of morality and implies a means to exert control over members of a society. This can include a certain ethic, such as the obligation to go to church or a temple, but it can also include paid memberships of a club, indicating that someone pertains to a particular social class (ibid:55). In contrast, the definition of liminoid includes a realm of free decision making, such as the liminoid of entertainment and performance. For instance, we are free to choose or buy music of different genres or we can go to the box office and choose to see a play, a show or a symphony orchestra of our choice. However, in practice, there are also ‘liminoid setting[s] and space[s]’ such as bars, pubs, cafes, clubs, art and exhibitions. These various activities and commodities fundamentally enable a liminoid in which people are free to choose.

With respect to theatre, Turner (ibid:113) argues that theatre forms part of the liminoid rather than the liminal, since people are theoretically free to choose and criticise the performance rather than having to accept or follow the norms of a group of which they form a part. With respect to the term drama, Turner (ibid:92) states that social drama is the drama showing a sequence of social interactions of a conflictive, competitive or agonistic type. In other words, it reflects a state of social crisis and represents a general cultural frame for reflexive processes (ibid:92). The concept of theatre or social drama, with the faculty to reflect social crisis, moreover relates to the control of institutions. As Schechner (cited in Turner 1982:93) argues, actors, in

practice, are subjected to the experience and control of the director or producer. The director departs from a viewpoint in which he assumes the possibility of the transformation of actors into other characters. Turner (ibid:93) argues that the notion of Schechner implies that the role of the actor is actually created by means of the rehearsal process. Moreover, Turner (ibid:99) explains his experience in the theatre workshop, revealing the importance of the play script as a means of improving the actor's performance. The concepts of a play script and rehearsal process suggest the way in which the actors are controlled by the director (ibid:99). Hence, this also means that the performance of social drama is informed by the social view and experience of the director or producer, which can in turn reflect a fundamental social crisis.

Apart from this, Turner engages with the meaning of ritual and theatre as a performance. Ritual is similar to theatre or drama, as it is 'an orchestration of symbolic actions and objects in sensory codes', which consists of activities, music, dancing and having an intermission of play and entertainment (ibid:119). Theatre is 'a liminoid process, set in the liminoid time of leisure, which is the period between [the] role-playing times of work'. It is the way of 'play and entertainment' (ibid:114).

Both theatre and ritual can have the capacity to help resolve social crises, as they represent an illuminating mirror of social conflicts. However, ritual and theatre still differ considerably. In the theatre, the audience has the choice to stay or leave the performance, while leaving a ritual equates to refusal to participate in a community, which can result in rejection or exile (ibid:112). In addition, Turner describes the relationship between theatre and real life as an act of cultural performance (ibid:107). Schechner (cited in Turner 1982:105) claims that 'performance is not free and easy', but that performance behaviour is a type of practised behaviour or 'restored behaviour' that has been rehearsed and learned since early childhood. This behaviour is then, not surprisingly, revealed during the performance (ibid:1982:105).

In conclusion, Turner establishes a clear link between the acting in a theatre or social drama and the 'acting' in people's everyday lives. Theatre can therefore also be described as the 'drama of living' (ibid:108). Theatre is a liminoid process representing shades of reality behind the mask of play. In practice, theatre represents an action as active culture. Theatre performances usually involve a process of rehearsal and overall preparation, which takes into account actors' and directors' experiences, and can even be deemed to last many years, which are necessary to develop the idea of active actors (ibid:117). The rehearsal process is hence a reflection of the social experience of the controlling director or producer, as well as the result of the past experiences of the performers. In other words, despite adopting a particular role in a play, the actor still acts as himself, as his own past experiences forms part of his play as 'oneself' (ibid:117). From this perspective, we (non-actors) are also acting, but on the stage of our own life, which resembles the stage of performances. We act in order to resolve crises, and sometimes we even have to act like 'monsters' or 'demons' in order to protect ourselves and our status in society (ibid:122). Hence, this leads us back to Turner's notion that theatrical acting is closely linked to the 'acting' in everyday life in society. Theatre sheds light on the social life or everyday life of people. It attempts to transfer aspects of real life such as economics, politics and local life onto the performance (ibid:116).

Turner's theories of ritual and theatre as cultural performances of social life are also applicable to the present research. With respect to the *prachan* process and its performance, I question the performative strategies and the ways in which musicians respond musically to each other. *Prachan* reflects the fundamental structure of Thai culture, which can be related to the response strategy, or the way in which the musicians in each ensemble respond to each other musically, including traditional Thai games and plays such as *sugawa* (สักวา), *phleeng choie* (เพลงฉ่อย), *tangum-ramkyo* (เต้นกำรำเคียว) and

likee (ลิเก). These are traditional Thai games that people play that imply responding to each other through singing. The *sugwa* game, for instance, is a Thai poetic game in which each poet tries to outstrip the other by performing an improvised composition. The idiosyncratic nature of the *prachan*, the various forms of responses and interactions it entails and the clear cultural performance it represents, all turn this music competition into a reflection of Thai culture, mirroring Thai social life. Taking into account the above-mentioned theories and concepts, it is hoped that the present research project on *prachan* as an expression of Thai musicians can help to shed light on the wider characteristics of Thai culture, Thai thinking and social processes.

Music Competitions and their Relevance to Culture

In order to analyse the Thai classical music competition *prachan*, it is of paramount importance to understand the concepts of music competitions and performances in other cultures as well. It is important to compare the characteristics and meaning of music competitions in other cultures to *prachan* and to carve out the distinct features that unite and divide them. This leads to the further question of the reasons for those differences. Do they lie in the social developments, race, or parameters of culture? Therefore, the aim is to complement the research with comparative material on music competitions in the West and other parts of Asia and South East Asia in particular.

The literature on music competitions and their place within different cultures illuminates the meaning of these cultural performances worldwide. An example is Tiago de Oliveira Pinto's '*Musical Difference, Competition and Conflict'* (1996). He engages with the *maracatu rural* music and dance parade competition that is part of the Pernambuco carnival in Brazil. He argues that the meaning of the performance of *maracatu rural* groups in competition consists of representing their identity to the

audience (Pinto 1996: 115). The Pernambuco carnival is an event that exhibits a wide musical variety that stems from the different social groups. These groups present and compete with each other intensively through music and at the same time use music as an articulation of social freedom (ibid:117). Pinto (Ibid:115) also states that for some ethnic groups, this competition is their only opportunity to be listened to by the general public, so it is a way for them to 'move into the centre of attention' (ibid:115). Interestingly, as ways of representing social identity among ethnic groups, the performances in the carnival can transform from competitions to conflicts or 'from play to war' (ibid:115). It is intriguing to relate this to the Thai music competition, *prachan*, which is a means to articulate identity through music schools to the Thai society. *Prachan* is also a platform for musicians to present their talent and work and to obtain attention in the world of Thai music. It can be assumed that the music competition in Thai culture derives from the will of musicians and their institutions to manifest their identity and their claim to a platform for representation. In Thailand, like in Brazil, *prachan* is a highly intense and competitive event, which in the past has caused several clashes between Thai music schools.

Michael Bakan, in '*Music of Death and New creation: Experiences in the World of Balinese Beleganjur*'(1999), describes the processes of the Gamelan Beleganjur[17] contest, called *Lomba Beleganjur*, for Bali music. The contest features an agenda of cultural nationalism that follows clear regulations set by the government. The Balinese Gamelan Beleganjur is regarded as the symbolic power of combination between local and national values (Bakan 1999:98). It reflects a national ideology, since the Balinese government has authority over the form and rules of the competition in exchange for the funding it provides for the event. Bakan also argues that a significant meaning of this music competition lies in the idea of social solidarity. However, even though the

[17] Gamelan Beleganjur is one of the styles of Balinese Gamelan music that has been used to inspire warriors in battle and also to provide spiritual power to the Balinese in order to participate in ritual performance.

competition is an important opportunity of community cooperation in order to preserve the cultural national identity, according to Bakan, it also represents the notion of a musical battle. This is because it is an intense competition that is traditionally associated with the 'hidden battles' among musicians in regard to multiple issues ranging from 'interpersonal and inter-village rivalries' to the ideological and cultural conflicts in broad aspects (ibid:219-220). Relating this again to *prachan*, it is noteworthy that *prachan*, too, is a congregation of social forces to preserve traditional Thai music. However, in practice, at times this attempt is also thwarted. For instance, since the *prachan* competition traditionally does not include a judgement, each musician and music school tends to think that they are the genuine winner. Therefore, the *prachan* competition features strong rivalry and the belittling of the antagonists' musical professionalism. To a certain extent, this leads to conflicting discourses about the winner and primacy over musical competence. In this sense, *prachan* at times results in conflict between musicians and music schools.

'*The Tabla of Lucknow: A cultural analysis of a musical tradition*' by James Kippen (2005) describes the relationship between politics and competition, which are inseparable in musicians' performance (ibid:61). Kippen describes the politics within Indian music, relating to the way in which the musicians try to find a way to challenge or outstrip each other with music in their performance. He describes the tricks that *tabla* players apply to disturb the instrumentalist. For instance, they may bribe a sound technician to distort the sound of the musician's singing or instrument by reducing the volume to a level at which the audience cannot hear the sound of the instrument, or alternatively increase it to a certain level that distorts his sounds. Another trick is using applause from the audience to destroy the confidence of the other musician. A *tabla* player might ask a group of his students to sit among the audience and clap, leading other audience members to follow them whenever he plays something, but when the

instrumentalist plays they do not clap and instead pay no attention. This causes the musician to lose face and confidence when he does not receive applause, as if the members of the audience do not like his performance. Relating this to *prachan* competitions, it is intriguing that the concept of *prachan* at present involves not only the performance of musicians themselves, but also the relevance of music technology, such as microphones, amplifiers and mixers, which can empower and distort the sounds and the identity of *prachan* ensembles - and also the audience's response, applauding their preferred ensemble. Since *prachan piiphaat seephaa* is an intense competition, some *prachan* players, just like Indian musicians, make use of these tricks to their advantage in performance.

I will draw on some of these sources and further material about other world music competitions that I consider relevant to the present research in other chapters. The relevance of music competitions will form the background and give rise to the significance of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* in Thai music culture.

Outline of the Thesis

I have structured this thesis in such a way as to disclose the concept and process of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* and musicians' way of life, reveal the process of *prachan* rehearsals and music with the involvement of mythology, explore *prachan* development and change in modern Thai society, and finally look deeply into its reflection of Thai music and culture. The thesis is wide-ranging, combining aspects of ethnomusicology, ethnography, music structure analysis, and history. In this chapter, I have already given an introduction to *prachan* music. I have given preliminary remarks by means of the term *prachan* with the scope, aims, and general historical background of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* in Thai music circles, followed by a representation of the theoretical

framework and music competitions and their relevance to the culture to broaden this research to include wider aspects of music competition.

Chapter 2 describes an overview of the four main *prachan* events in my fieldwork in 2012-13 in Bangkok and the surrounding rural areas by employing reflexivity theory, participant observation, and emic and etic approaches to *prachan* events and their relevance. This chapter also illustrates the distinctive features of the *prachan* performance at each *prachan* event and explores the different views of people towards *prachan* competitions in the context of *prachan*.

Chapter 3 reveals the concept and process of conceptual fighting and conflict. It shows the significant relationships between the conceptual fighting and symbolic cultural meaning approaches involved with the musicians' relationships, and represents how these concepts function in *prachan* and Thai music circles. Audience response is also taken into account in the *prachan* process and conflict. This chapter also represents the framework of the interactive approach in *prachan* relating to the development of musical communication and social activity. It represents the four paradigms of the concept of musical interaction and response and ends with a discussion about the power of music.

Chapter 4 moves to in-depth knowledge of *prachan* through *prachan* rehearsals, music lessons, and mythology. This chapter illustrates the process of *prachan* rehearsals for two musical ensembles, the Sit-Reungnond and the Kamlai, revealing their teaching/leaning systems and styles and the relationships between the teacher and pupils in music schools. My *prachan* music lesson with *Khruu* Chaiya Thangmisi is also taken into account in understanding the structure of *seephaa* pieces, musical techniques and strategies, and the elements of the teaching/learning process in Thai music. The concept of mythology, arguably, functions around the process of both *prachan* rehearsals and music lessons.

Chapter 5 explores the development of and change in *prachan* in modern Thai society. This chapter illustrates musicians' relationships in terms of music schools and institutions and how the power of institutions has an enormous impact on the form of *prachan piiphaat seephaa*, the music education system, and the existence of the music school in modern Thai society. This chapter analyses the change in the *prachan piiphaat seephaa* format by giving a comparison between standard, *ngaan prachan piiphaat naa phratiinang* (งานประชันปี่พาทย์หน้าพระที่นั่ง), and contemporary *prachan* formats. It then discusses the development and trends in the *prachan* concept at present through several aspects, such as the expansion of choices in regard to the *prachan* pieces in each repertoire, a new style of *haang phleeng* (*ทางเพลง*) piece, and so forth. Lastly, music technology and media have significant effects on *prachan* performance and culture.

Chapter 6 looks closely at the relationships between *prachan* and Thai music and culture at a deeper level. This chapter sheds light on the reflection on *prachan* in Thai music and culture as a culture of spontaneous response and fighting. The chapter discusses *prachan* as a development process of Thai music and society through four paradigms and explores the relationship between *prachan* and culture through the change and movement and the concept of the contraction of time and space in modern Thai society. The final chapter provides a summary overview of *prachan* and the main themes of this thesis with new directions in relation to the conceptual framework presented above.

Chapter 2: Performing the *Prachan*

My first experience with *prachan* fieldwork occurred during my time as a *prachan* musician in 2002 in Bangkok at Watpa Lopburi (Lopburi temple), as a *pii nai* (quadruple-reed oboe) player in the ensemble of Chaiyuth Tosa-nga. This was my first time playing in a *prachan piiphaat seephaa* competition and, through it, I gained extensive experience that I had never had previously from other music performances. I was very excited about the great *prachan* that night with the variety of pieces, and the various musical techniques and strategies that each ensemble applied in the competition on stage. At the same time, I was very impressed by the number of audience members with their diversity and the uniqueness of the *prachan* environment at this temple. The *Prachan* at that event was very compelling to me and others in terms of participating in and perceiving the variety of musical ideas and expression in the music performance. It represented a way of social aggregation and embodiment in Thai music circles. I had another great experience and broadened my knowledge of *prachan* in 2004 when I was one of the members of Korphai (a Thai traditional and contemporary music band) accompanying the famous Thai traditional music film *'Hom Rong*' regarding *prachan* music. Arguably, I learnt different aspects of *prachan* music and its history through my expertise as a woodwind player accompanying this film, playing the *pii nai* part in *piiphaat seephaa* ensembles. This shaped my mind in terms of broader aspects of *prachan*, for example, the concept of a musical battle in Thai music circles. This made me interested in *prachan* and its significance to Thai music culture. Unexpectedly, it has been my good fortune to carry out research on *prachan* music for my PhD thesis. My experience, arguably, inspired me to conduct this research into *prachan* music in relation to wider aspects of Thai music culture. In this research, there is no doubt that the fieldwork has been the key to perceiving *prachan* in the broader context of Thai

music and society. During my fieldwork, I found that the concept of liminality or a liminal position played a key role in my success. It might be said that my place as a researcher or PhD student and my role as a Thai musician created an obscure boundary around me during the fieldwork. To a certain extent, I felt that as a researcher or PhD student from the UK, I had a passport to undertake my fieldwork, gaining permission to cross the boundary into the realm of Thai music culture. I gained authority to get information from the key figures and others regarding my academic and educational purposes. However, I found that being a Thai musician - an insider - also gave me great potential to gain in-depth information about *prachan* and establish actual relationships with others in the field, which a researcher cannot reach. This is because a researcher at first glance is mostly judged by most musicians as a high education/status person who cannot truly be part of a group of musicians and their lives. According to this, my position developed throughout the process of my fieldwork, in which I was perceived not only as a researcher, but also as a musician. I mediated and created a balance between both sides of myself, as a researcher and musician, by planning and developing ideas and strategies during my fieldwork in terms of how to gain access to and acquire information while behaving and expressing myself as a Thai musician. I did this in order to establish my social relation and acquaintance with others to get access to information at the same time as questioning and being critical of the circumstance and process of *prachan* music in terms of the musicians' behaviour and culture. This, arguably, broadened my mind in regard to different aspects of the fieldwork in terms of the concept of liminality, i.e. not behaving and being perceived as either an outsider or an insider, but positioning myself in between them. The mediation or liminality created an uncertain boundary in terms of my perception and status, allowing me to gain information and have opportunities to participate in *prachans* and rehearsals. This led me to acquire a concrete and in-depth knowledge of *prachan* music.

In ethnomusicology, fieldwork is the fundamental research method used by ethnomusicologists to comprehend music and wider aspects of its relevance. It leads us to perceive the way in which music has been constructed and proceeds, as well as how people define and perceive music in different cultures and societies. Fieldwork has been highly formative in redefining my research, especially in terms of finding the very meaning of *prachan* and how its music works and can serve as a means through which to better understand Thai mentalities and society. Hence, in order to perceive the characteristics, meaning, process and implications of *prachan*, it is important to describe *prachan* and its effects by means of direct experience, as obtained through my fieldwork.

The core of my fieldwork in this research focuses on interviews and participant observation through my experiences in *prachan* events, music schools, institutions, and so forth. In order to describe *prachan*, particularly *prachan piiphaat seephaa* and its cultural context in this fieldwork, the concepts of reflexive theory and participant observation should be taken into account. Cooley and Barz (2008:19-20) argue that reflexive theory is a new approach to ethnomusicology that looks at music as culture not as an object[18] and places the emphasis on 'reflexive, nonobjectivist scholarship'. This theory emphasises the understanding of experience, particularly the 'personal context of experience', by means of sharing experience with others while conducting fieldwork (ibid.:20). In his work 'Why Suya Sing' (2004), Seeger highlights the importance of participant observation during performance, stating that it contributes to the appropriate comprehension of Suya singing (ibid.:96-97). Seeger found that this concept does not simply denote a way of gaining access to the knowledge of that culture, but that it indicates the way of corresponding or sharing music with each other (Seeger 1987, cited in Barz and Cooley 2008:20). As mentioned above, in my fieldwork I decided to employ the concept of reflexive theory and participant observation in *prachan* events

[18] For instance, the collection of recordings for later analysis.

and its involvement through rehearsals in music schools and my *prachan* music lessons. Therefore, in this chapter, I would like to describe the concept of *prachan* through the fieldwork methods used during my fieldwork in Thailand.

Initial Plan and Subsequent Changes to the Fieldwork

My fieldwork focuses on significant *prachan* music competitions that took place between August 2012 and August 2013 in Bangkok and rural areas of Thailand. My initial plan was to participate in two annual *prachan* that occurred at Wat Phra Phireen and Watpa Lopburi, alongside applying participant observation in music concerts and rehearsals, and interviewing around 100 people comprising musicians, music masters, music scholars, Thai national artists, sound engineers, and audiences, as well as searching for information in Thai music libraries. However, in practice, the *prachan* event at Watpa Lopburi was banned from 2008 onwards (due to a dispute between the abbot and the musicians). Hence, I changed my plan and decided to participate in another *prachan* in Wat Sriprawat, which is a new venue for *prachan* competitions, arranged by a well-known musician working in the Fine Arts Department of Thailand (Krom Silpakorn). However, after participating in these two *prachan* competitions, I found significant differences between the *prachan* styles and processes in different places and the way in which the musicians respond to each other through music alongside the involvement of audiences in the competition. Therefore, I decided to restrict the parameters of my fieldwork to eight *prachans* located in Bangkok and some neighbouring rural areas.

Fieldwork

Regarding my fieldwork in the eight *prachan* music competitions, I found that there were several aspects that were somewhat different from my previous experience as a

musician in *prachan* competitions. I applied participant observation (with field materials such as a recorder, video, and camera) and reflexivity methods, as well as being aware of emic and etic approaches to *prachan* events, rehearsals and music lessons. Hence, I found differences among those *prachans* in terms of the characteristics and processes, as well as the implications of each performance. So, in my research, I will illustrate four significant *prachan* events from my fieldwork: *prachan* Wat Phra Phireen, *prachan* Wat Sriprawat, *prachan* Ngaan Loy-Krathong Ratchaburi (the Loy Krathong festival on the Maeklong river, Ratchaburi province) and *prachan* 11th *Piiphaat Seephaa*-tii-Wang Naa (between four military services, the Fine Arts Department of Thailand (Krom Silpakorn) and Music Division - Culture, Sports and Tourism Department/Bangkok). These experiences of *prachan*, apart from providing a view of the performances, will also lead the reader to perceive the process of Thai music competitions, the strategies of response, and the beliefs, manner, myths and conflicts between the musicians and music schools and so forth by means of the application of a conceptual fighting model to Thai music. Focusing on these aspects will lead the reader to develop a deeper perspective and understanding of Thai musical society and culture.

Prachan Wat Phra Phireen

Following my fieldwork plan, in September 2012 my initial participation in *prachan piiphaat seephaa* was at Wat Phra Phireen. This is a prestigious Buddhist temple, well-known in Thai musical society as a major stage for the *prachan piiphaat seephaa* competition that has taken place once a year on a Thursday in September since 2513/1970. Wat Phra Phireen is located at Woracak Road, Banbaht Subdistrict, Pomprabsutrupaay District, Bangkok. This temple is well known as both the *likee*[19] and

[19] A genre of Thai traditional dramatic performance

the *piiphaat* temple and as a cemetery for performers supported by the abbot *Phra Khun Cao* Phrathep Khunathan, a great supporter of Thai performing arts. However, after the abbot died, the performers tried to gather all of the artists to form performers' association called the *Samakom-Songkroe-Sahaaysilpin* or the Association for Assistance to Friends and Performers (Prong 2516/1973:1-14). This was established in 1970 to sponsor poor performers' funerals, and was led by Prof. Dr. Utit Narksawat, the president of the association, and a great supporter of Thai classical music and *prachan* competitions.

Figure 2.1: Wat Phra Phireen, a prestigious Buddhist temple that is used for the *prachan piiphaat seephaa* in Thai society

Wat Phra Phireen is renowned in Thai music circles as a platform for creating and promoting famous musicians and music schools, leading to their being accepted in Thai society. In other words, a musician or an ensemble that participates in this event is accepted in Thai music circles as a professional musician. Significantly, this leads to a considerable improvement in their musical lives. From the past to the present, famous musicians, such as Thai national artists in *piiphaat* music, have mostly gained their

experience of *prachan* competitions at this temple. Taking part in the *prachan* at Wat Phra Phireen symbolises social acceptance as a great professional musician in Thai society.

Wat Phra Phireen, by and large, is known as the site of the most famous and spectacular *wai khruu* ceremony (teacher homage ceremony) in Bangkok. Each year, over a thousand participants, including audience members and performers, such as *likee* actors, *piiphaat* musicians and Thai traditional dancers from several institutions and schools, participate in this event in order to show respect for and to be blessed by the Gods of music and the arts. Implicitly, this ceremony is a social gathering for Thai performers, particularly *piiphaat* musicians. Since it is a significant ceremony gathering a large number of people, especially famous musicians from different places (mostly from Bangkok and the surrounding rural areas), it is a great opportunity for musicians and music schools, once a year, to participate and declare their musical proficiency to all adept musicians through the *prachan*. The *prachan* at Wat Phra Phireen is an event that occurs as part of the wider *wai khruu* ceremony. In traditional Thai music and dramatic arts, there are usually performances the day before the *wai khruu* ritual, which is called *wan suk dib,* meaning the day of preparing elaborate food offerings and places for the Gods. However, nowadays, the performance has changed and is held either the day before or the day after the ritual because of the increasing number of performers from several groups. Since there are several troupes of both *likee* (popular theatre) and *prachan* performers every year, particularly in this temple, the performances are spread over several days, before and after the *wai khruu* ritual, to give the many groups the opportunity to perform. Interestingly, *prachan piiphaat seephaa* is required after the ritual. In the 2012 *wai khruu* ceremony at Wat Phra Phireen, the *likee* from different troupes performed for six consecutive nights (from 31st Aug to 5th Sept) before the day of the ritual and the *prachan piiphaat seephaa* performances took place on 6 September. From this point of view, it might be said that the *prachan piiphaat seephaa* is

considered to be a part of the *wai khruu* ceremony, and is the only music event that usually occurs before or after the ritual.

During my fieldwork at this temple, the *prachan* occurred on Thursday 6 September 2012 from around 8:00pm to 5:00am the next morning, and it took place directly after the *wai khruu* ritual. I woke up in the morning at around 8:30am and decided to go to Wat Phra Phireen to observe and collect information on the *wai khruu* ritual before watching the *prachan* that night. However, it was a rainy day and there was a disastrous traffic jam in the morning in Bangkok. Therefore I arrived at the temple quite late, at almost 12 noon. Even though it was quite late, it was still crowded with many people, who were queuing in order to participate in the ceremony, as well as with vendors selling food and snacks around the temple area. When I arrived, the main ritual (with ritual music - *naa phaat* (หน้าพาทย์) pieces) played by *piiphaat* players had already finished. Therefore, I tried to film and record the rest of the rituals with my video and sound recorders. One part of the ceremony that I observed is called the '*khraup khruu'* (ครอบครู) ritual or blessing ritual. During this ceremony, an officiant, *Khruu* Boonleards Narkpinij gave blessings and raised the ceremonial mask of the gods of music to be placed over the heads of the participants in front of the *wai khruu* altar. Another part of the ceremony is called the *'cap muu*' (จับมือ) (hands being grasped) or initiation ritual. During this ritual, *Khruu* Boonsrang Reungnond, an assistant, helped the officiant to initiate students who wanted to learn Thai classical music by grasping each student's hands to play a short phrase of the piece *Sathukarn* (สาธุการ) (the first level of the ritual repertoire or *naa phaat* pieces). During the *wai khruu* ceremony in the afternoon, I interviewed some people around the temple about the *prachan piiphatt* that night, and it seemed that those people were still waiting attentively for this competition. Hence, I decided to go back home to prepare myself to collect information about the *prachan* that night in this temple.

I returned to Wat Phra Phireen in the evening at around 5-6pm with my cousin John. He was going to work as my fieldwork assistant, videoing the whole *prachan* performance, while I observed, conducted interviews, took pictures and participated with groups of musicians and the audience at the event. Surprisingly, when I came to the event in the evening, the *wai khruu* ceremony was still continuing. However, it was at the end of the *wai khruu* ceremony that the officiant pressed his hands together by his chest whilst chanting in front of all of the ceremonial masks of the music masters on the altar. Then, a *piiphaat* ensemble performed a ritual piece to send the spirits of all of the music masters back to heaven. At that moment, I realised that the *prachan* was about to begin in the large open-air pavilion inside the temple. Therefore, I decided to have dinner with John around the temple pavilion, Thai noodle soup sold by a vendor, since I realised that we might not have much time for dinner afterwards, as the *prachan* would last all night. Meanwhile, the temple staff were organising the space and stage for the *prachan*, as John and I tried to find a suitable space to set up my video camera to record the event. Although the space was large, with many seats for the audience, some had already reserved the best viewpoints and seats for themselves. Therefore, it was not straightforward to find the best position for the video camera's 35mm lens to see the full stage of the competition. However, in the end we found a small space in the middle row of the audience seats and we achieved a better angle by adjusting the tripod position. The environment of the *prachan* at the temple pavilion was overcrowded that year with the various groups of performers and audience members, including Thai musicians from different music schools or institutions, music teachers, music students, monks, music agencies, and vendors, as well as general audience members. The audience seemed to be particularly attentive to this competition: I saw approximately ten other people, students or musicians, trying to film this *prachan* through their own video cameras and mobile phones.

I was surprised that there were eight music ensembles comprising four pairs: Sornmechai Ruengroung versus Chau-Namsin, Payuungsin versus Kamlai, Sit-Reungnond versus Saue Banlengsin, and Kunchaun Duriya versus Sit-Thonghlore. In 2012, the character and identity of the musical ensembles from the different music schools were quite varied in terms of age and sex. They comprised young musician ensembles (aged 13-17 years), female ensembles, male ensembles, and ensembles containing a mix of musicians in terms of sex and age. Besides, I felt that the musicians from the different groups that year were keener than usual to represent their new music pieces, styles, techniques and musical instruments to others. Before the *prachan* began, I talked to both MCs of this event, Mr. Anant Narkkong and Mr. Khomsun Suthon, regarding the framework and rules of this *prachan*. They said that the form of the *prachan piiphaat seephaa* at Wat Phra Phireen is that the pairs of musical ensembles take it in turns to performs *prachan* music and the form of *prachan* related to three different types of Thai music repertoire can be separated into three parts comprising the *probkai* (ปรบไก่),[20] *tayoe* (ทยอย),[21] and *diaw* (เดี่ยว) (solo). In each part, each ensemble has to perform piece by piece in order to respond to the other.

At the *prachan* at Wat Phra Phireen, by and large, the musical ensembles are placed beside each other on the stage. Between two ensembles, the first ensemble to perform or set the first action on stage is called the '*wong tung'* (standing or setting ensemble) and the second ensemble, which responds, is called the '*wong prachan'* (competing or responding ensemble).

[20] *Probkai* is one of the two major types of Thai music repertoire and rhythmic pattern. In *prachan*, musicians, generally, call musical pieces that are from the *probkai* repertoire either *phleeng* (*prapeet*) *probkai* or *naa thap probkai*, referring to the type of musical piece accompanied by the *probkai* rhythmic pattern.
[21] *Tayoe* is one of the major types of Thai music repertoire and rhythmic pattern. The pieces in this category are made up of '*nua*' (a main melody that is fixed in length) alternately with '*yoon*' (a melody that oscillates unequally around one note) melodies. In *prachan*, musicians call musical pieces that are from the *tayoe* repertoire *phleege* (*prapeet*) *tayoe* or *naa thap tayoe*, alluding to the type of musical piece accompanied by the *saung maai* or *tayoe* rhythmic pattern.

Figure 2.2: The *Prachan* at Wat Phra Phireen 2012

First Pair:

The first pair of *prachan* at this event was the Sornmechai Ruengroung (light pink T-shirts) versus the Chau-Namsin ensemble (dark Pink T-shirts); the *wong tung* (first) and *wong prachan* (second) ensembles respectively. *Prachan* ensembles traditionally consist of only male players. However, the majority of the musicians in the Sornmechai Ruengroung ensemble, interestingly, were female. Moreover, the *ranaat eek* players (the leaders) in both ensembles were also female. In particular, the *ranaat eek* player in the Sornmechai Ruengroung ensemble was a girl aged only 13, but her performance showed a great deal of technical competence. Both ensembles performed their music strategically and energetically. For instance, the Sornmechai Ruengroung ensemble started their performance with a short introductory piece with solo phrases on the *ranaat eek* (treble xylophone) and the *ranaat thum* (bass xylophone) before going on to their main *prachan* piece, the *Teph Runjuan* (*thao*) from the *probkai* repertoire. Surprisingly, in this *prachan*, the Sornmechai Ruengroung ensemble or the Suikeeluck music school presented the *Phraya* Sanorduriyaang version of the *Teph Runjuan* (เพลง

รัญจวน) piece (1866-1949 also known as Cham Suntharawaathin), one of the great court musicians and composers during the reign of King Rama V and King Rama VI (mid 19th to early 20th century). This version is an old and sophisticated version that is not widely known among Thai musicians.

On the other hand, the Chau-Namsin ensemble began their performance by using a singer to sing a *wai khruu lyric* to pay respect to all of the music teachers - both human and spirits - before performing their new composition *Sroyphrasore* (*สร้อยพระศอ*) (*thao*), for the listeners (DVD track 1). In Thai classical music, performing an old or sophisticated piece that is not widely known among musicians demonstrates that the ensemble is knowledgeable, with secret or sophisticated knowledge. Moreover, playing a new composition that is not widely known, traditionally, is a way for an ensemble to show its musical knowledge and creativity. A new composition in *prachan*, traditionally, is a way to challenge other musicians and music teachers in regard to guessing the origin of the piece the composer used as a model for this new composition. It is common practice in Thai classical music composition for a composer to use a small traditional piece, particularly from the *saung chan* (*สองชั้น*) metrical level, as a model to develop, by expanding or contracting the piece in different levels and different styles to create a new piece. Hence, if the musicians and listeners at a *prachan* event have never heard, or are not able to recognise, the fundamental piece that contributed to the creation of the composition, the musicians who performed in that piece will be proud of themselves for playing a piece that others do not know and for having a great composer at their music school. Both ensembles, as well as competing with each other, also attempted to impress the audience with their music by applying specific musical techniques, in particular instruments together with body movements. For instance, when the woman who played the *ranaat thum* in the Sornmechai Ruengroung ensemble performed her solo part, she tried to represent her musical competence by showing

unpredictably superior improvisation while raising her shoulders and leaning her head forwards to the audience while soloing. This kind of solo and action successfully impressed the audience, since it was a way of showing musical expression through body movement. Arguably, this is somewhat different from the original classical style of *prachan*, in which performers demonstrate good manners or politeness in their performance, particularly when they perform in institutions or palaces. The same occurred with the Chau-Namsin ensemble: the audience cheered and shouted out support for them when the *khong wong yai* player used the technique '*khwaimuu*'(*ไขว้มือ*), crossing the hands or arms to beat a *khong* (gong) to make different sounds, in a phrase of a *Kraao Nai* (*กราวใน*) solo piece, which he had adapted into the *prachan* piece. The significant feature of those ensembles was that in the part of the *tayoe* (*ทยอย*) repertoire, they tried to apply some phrases from the *Kraao Nai* and *Tayoe Diaw* solo pieces to the *prachan* in order to challenge each other. At the *prachan*, the Sornmechai Ruengroung ensemble made the competition more intense with the *Tayoe Nai* (*ทยอยใน*) piece by applying some parts of two high-status solo pieces, *Kraao Nai* and *Tayoe Diaw,* in the *haang phleeng*.[22] Likewise, in the course of the new composition *Phau Khaung Puang Chon* (*พ่อของปวงชน*) (*thao*), the Chau-Namsin also responded to the other ensemble by playing solo phrases from these solo pieces in the *haang phleeng*.

Before starting the third part (solo section) of the first pair of *prachan*, I interviewed W, a sub-lieutenant in the Thai Royal army and leader of the Chau-Namsin ensemble, regarding the performances of his ensemble and the other one. He claimed that his ensemble performed music strategically by gradually increasing the tempo in each movement and metrical level of *saam chan* (*สามชั้น*), *saung chan* (*สองชั้น*), and *chan dieo* (*ชั้นเดียว*). In contrast, the other ensemble played only in a fast tempo for every

[22] *Haang phleeng* is a type of a small piece (at *saung chan* or *chan dieo* metrical level) in traditional Thai music that is traditionally performed after the main piece.

movement and metrical level, which is not regarded as good music practice. He argued that this is the fundamental musical knowledge that *prachan* musicians must have, if they have been instructed correctly by their teacher. Moreover, he noticed that *prachan* has advantages for young musicians to develop their musical ability as well as to be creative in music. Furthermore, he argued against an overemphasis on conflict in *prachan*. He claimed:

> It is not true about conflict in *prachan,* in fact we are quite compatible. We participate in *prachan* to harmonize our Thai musical society as brothers. So, if somebody claims that they do not want to participate in *prachan* or compete with each other because they are trying to avoid having problems with others, it means that that person is not a real musician. The *Prachan* at Wat Phra Phireen is where Thai musicians perform to pay respect to the gods of music and music teacher spirits. We only perform the *prachan* in the *wai khruu* ceremony once a year in this temple
> (W, Sub-lieutenant, Thai Royal army, interview, 6/09/2012).

After the solo pieces, when the first pair in the *prachan* had finished, I tried to catch up with the musicians of the Sornmechai Ruengroung ensemble, but they left instantly after finishing their performance. So I missed the opportunity to interview them about their performance and their perspectives on *prachan*. By and large, I preferred the performance of the Sornmechai Ruengroung ensemble to the other one since their *ranaat eek* player, a very young girl, played relatively smoothly with the others and had mastered a range of improvisation techniques. In the Chau-Namsin ensemble, the *ranaat eek* player and their ensemble performed quite quickly and were louder, but the sound was very unpleasant. Nevertheless, I realised later that the reason why I did not like the performance of the second ensemble was because of a problem with their microphone, which was not efficient and stable. I was also annoyed by the noises from the amplifiers several times during their performance. Furthermore, the microphones had not been set up properly for all of the musical instruments in the *prachan*,

particularly the *pii nai* (ปี่ใน) (quadruple-reed oboe). I had not heard the *pii nai* sounds clearly in the competition when they performed together in the ensemble.

In addition, it seemed that the interesting aspect of this *prachan* was not only the *prachan* itself. During the performance of these ensembles, I saw a man trying to sell his pile of *ranaat eek* beaters to musicians at the back of the stage. He said, 'This is only for Pom and his friends, 500 Baht for a pair of beaters [he was a famous musician and a leader of the Kamlai ensemble], but outside these sell for around 2,000 to 2500 Baht'. Yo, a female *ranaat eek* player from the Kamlai ensemble, responded to his offer immediately. She bought one pair of hard beaters from him and tested them immediately on her instrument, while waiting for her next performance. Apart from this man, I saw another man named Noklek, a navy officer, selling Thai musical instruments and beaters, such as *klui* (ขลุ่ย) (a flute), soft beaters for the *ranaat eek* and so forth, in front of the temple pavilion. Therefore, I realised that in this competition, not only are there many vendors selling food and games, but also there are many music sellers, acting as agents, trying to sell or promote their handicrafts and musical instruments to the musicians and the audience.

Second pair:

I was rather excited to see the second pair of *prachan* - the Payuungsin versus the Kamlai ensembles - perform, particularly the Kamlai ensemble. The reason why I focused on the Kamlai ensemble was because I had participated with and interviewed this group during their rehearsal for three days, undertaking participant observation in their rehearsal before the competition. Hence, I was keen to see their performance in the actual *prachan.* In their rehearsal, I also learned the way of *prachan* music and its strategy from Chaiyuth Tosa-nga, known as 'Pom', one of the famous *ranaat eek* players in *prachan.* He taught his students how to display musical techniques and apply

some parts of solo pieces to the *prachan* pieces. Before the competition began, I interviewed a *pii nai* player from the Kamlai ensemble named *Phleeng*. I filmed video about her views and feelings in regard to *prachan* competitions. She claimed that at this event, the musicians performed music as a way of showing their respect to the gods of music and music masters' spirits. Moreover, she argued that in her opinion, she did not want to *prachan* or compete with others, since that was a way of creating conflict. However, she said that she had to do so, since it was her duty as a musician to protect the reputation of her ensemble:

> In practice, I do not want to *prachan*, I do not want to make conflict with others. The reason why I am here is because I am doing my duty as a member of the ensemble. I have to help my friends as well as protect the fame of our ensemble and institution from being insulted by others (*Phleeng*, a musician from Kamlai ensemble, interviewed 6/09/2012).

Before starting the second pair of *prachan*, an MC tossed a coin in front of the audience and asked for a representative from each ensemble to choose heads or tails in order to determine which ensemble was going to perform first. As a result, it was decided that the Payuungsin would play first (*wong-tung*), and the Kamlai would perform afterwards (*wong prachan*). The Payuungsin ensemble started their performance with a *hua phleeng* (หัวเพลง) or small introductory piece, showing a short solo musical part on each instrument. Then they performed the *Phan Farang* (พันธุ์ฝรั่ง) (*thao*) piece, in which a *ranaat eek* player showed the *khayii*[23] technique during the end of the singer's part before coming into the melody of the instrument part. In the last part of this piece, the Payuungsin performed a *haang pheelng* piece called '*Yoosalam*'(โยสลัม), which had a *samniang*[24] *farang* (สำเนียงฝรั่ง) or a western music dialect, alongside showing a solo on

[23] *Khayii* is a musical technique in Thai musical performance. It is the way in which a performer improvises their melody on the main melody at double speed

[24] *Samniang* is the characteristic of foreign dialects in Thai music.

each instrument. While the first ensemble was performing, I followed the Kamlai musicians backstage to observe their behaviour and expression before the *prachan*. It seemed that before the *prachan* began, all of the Kamlai musicians looked somewhat serious, so I decided to interview them about their feelings at that moment. Interestingly, their answers and behaviour were somewhat different from my expectation of performers who are under pressure before a competition. For instance, when I spoke to C, a *khong wong yai* player, she answered plainly with a big smile, 'I am under great pressure now', while P, a *khong wong lek* player, said, 'Now I feel excited and under pressure, but I like it… I like this pressure in competition, since it makes me feel good. This is the reason why I like *prachan*'.

When the Kamlai's musicians knew that it was almost the end of the first piece of the Payuungsin's performance, before walking onto the stage, all of the musicians came together as a group behind the stage and paid respect to their teacher, Chaiyuth, by pressing their hands together and bowing their heads in front of him. Chaiyuth also pressed his hands together and chanted the words of a spell to bless his students in their performance. At that moment, I realised that Chaiyuth was paying particular attention to Yo, a *ranaat eek* player, since she was the leader of the ensemble. After showing respect to Chaiyuth, Yo also gave her own hard *ranaat eek* beater to Chaiyuth. Then he blessed the beater with his spell for a while and returned it to her. Yo mentioned later, 'P'Pom (Chaiyuth) has got this spell from his father, which descends from his ancestors… this spell will affect all our performance… in practice, I know this might be some kind of psychology of performance, but I still believe it'. After the Payuungsin ensemble had finished their performance with the *Phan Farang* piece, the Kamlai ensemble performed *Phma Hea* (พม่าเห่) (*thao*) (DVD track 2), a Thai music piece that has a Burmese dialect. However, they performed a new version of this piece created by Chaiyuth. In other words, they represented a new arrangement of their teacher's

composition. In their performance, the Kamlai ensemble started with the introduction piece while showing the *ranaat eek* technique *khayii* (ขยี้) to show their musical competence to the other ensemble (DVD Track 3). Surprisingly, even though it was only an introduction, the Kamlai ensemble gained a big hand from the audience. In my opinion, the reason why they received high praise from the audience was because they are female. Even though they are young female musicians, they were able to show that their musical competence was equal to male or virtuoso musicians. In particular, Yo, the *ranaat eek* player, gained a big round of applause from the audience, since she was able to show many techniques smoothly and fluently in her performance, such as *khayii* (ขยี้), *rua* (รัว), *kwaat thaang* (กวาดถ่าง),[25] etc. Moreover, in her improvisation on the *ranaat eek*, even though she played her piece quickly, her melody was clear and she was able to maintain the full sound quality of the instrument. In the performance of the Kamlai ensemble, at the *chan dieo* metrical level, they displayed a small solo piece on each instrument to respond to their opponents. Besides, they showed a drum pattern in *phma*, or Burmese dialect, to accompany a *haang phleeng* piece '*Phma Klongyaao*' (พม่ากลองยาว), and ended with *luukhmot* (ลูกหมด), the finale section of a musical composition (DVD track 4).

In the second part, the Payuungsin showed their musical competence by playing at high speed in the *Khaek Lopburii Thaang Baangkhaulaem* (แขกลพบุรีทางบางคอแหลม) (*thao*) piece. They also incorporated a *ranaat eek* solo with a complex *rao* technique in the *khaek* (India) dialect in the *haang phleeng*, and they used the *khayii* technique by playing three notes repetitively several times at high speed, both to accompany a singer and also in the *haang phleeng*. They did this to show the talent and strength of the *ranaat eek* player to their opponents. During the Payuungsin's performance in the

[25] These are high level *ranaat eek* performance techniques. For example, *rao* is the timbre technique where the beaters are used in both hands to play alternately on one note or different notes constantly. *Kwaat Thaang* is considered to be a new *ranaat eek* technique, where the beaters are used in both hands to sweep the notes on the *ranaat eek* in the left and right directions at the same time.

Khaek Lopburii Thaang Baangkhaulaem (*thao*), Yo went backstage and tried to warm up her wrists and rehearse her solo piece on the *ranaat eek*. Chaiyuth, as her teacher, sat on the chair beside her while she warmed up and gave her some advice about the *prachan*. At that moment, while observing their behaviour, I felt that Yo was under pressure over her performance, since the *ranaat eek* player is like the leader of the ensemble. Nevertheless, even though Yo was worried about her performance, she was very confident when playing the *Tayoe Yuan* (ทยอยญวน) (*thao*) piece to respond to the Payuungsin ensemble. In this piece, the highlight of the performance was a solo part for each instrument in the course of the *chan dieo* metrical level. In particular, Yo showed her musical proficiency by including some parts of a *Kraao Nai* piece in the *ranaat eek* solo. Besides, she also applied an outstanding technical method of solo performing called '*yown klade*' (ย้อนเกล็ด) in this piece. This is a sophisticated performing method that shows the musical proficiency and strength of a *ranaat eek* player, as a leader to challenge their opponents, in which a musical piece is arranged to be played at different musical levels: the *chan dieo*, the *saung chan*, and then the *saam chan* metrical level. Then, the procedure is reversed with the *saam chan*, the *saung chan*, and then the *chan dieo* metrical level. As Yo was able to represent this special method in the *prachan* so competently, she received a big round of applause together with cheering and shouting from the audience. In addition to this piece, after the performance at the *chan dieo* level in the *haang phleeng* piece, all of the main musical instruments in the ensemble also applied another part of the *Kraao Nai* piece to play as solos in the course of the *haang phleeng*. The reason why they performed in this way is because they wanted to challenge the other ensemble before ending with the *luukhmot* section, as usual. In the third part (*ranaat eek* solo), Yo again demonstrated her virtuoso ability in the solo piece *Nok Khamin* (นกขมิ้น) (*thao*) by showing complex techniques at high speed, whereas the opponent played a solo with the *Suit-sa-ngwuan* (สุดสงวน) (*saam chan*) piece.

Figure 2.3: Yo, a *ranaat eek* player from the Kamlai ensemble, shows parts of a *Kraao Nai* solo piece, in the course of the *Tayoe Yuan* piece, with the performing method '*yown klade*' in the *prachan* at Wat Phra Phireen 2012 (DVD track 5)

As mentioned above, apparently, the Kamlai ensemble gave an excellent performance. In my view, their performance was outstanding in terms of technique and teamwork. However, during the *prachan* on stage at this time, I was curious about the sound quality of Yo's performance on the *ranaat eek,* which was somewhat different from what I had experienced during her rehearsal. I remembered that in the rehearsals Yo had had very good skills in terms of the techniques and speed, but the sound quality of her *ranaat eek* had been weak. In the *prachan*, unexpectedly, she was able to produce a much fuller sound quality on the *ranaat eek*. At this point, I realised that the influence of the microphone and amplifier should be taken into consideration. They support the sound quality of the performer as well as helping the audience to hear the sound of musical instruments loudly and more clearly. Moreover, before and during the *prachan*, the musicians in almost every ensemble tried to adjust the microphone on stage to their instruments by themselves. Furthermore, they kept telling the sound engineer to adjust the volume up or down as well as how to mix the sound for the best sound quality for their ensemble during the competition. With this approach in mind, I wondered if it was

possible that ways of applying technology, such as microphones, amplifiers and so forth, in *prachan*, are among the strategies used in *prachan* competitions.

Third pair:

Moving on to the third pair of *prachan* in this event, the Sit-Reungnond and the Saue Banlengsin ensembles wore green and orange T-shirts respectively. Arguably, this match was the favourite *prachan* of the audience and other musician groups, since both ensembles were very proficient. Both ensembles had been trained and instructed by famous music teachers. The Sit-Reungnond ensemble was led by *Khruu* Boonsrang Reungnond, a famous *prachan* musician who was a pupil of two legendary musicians, *Khruu* Prasit Thaworn and *Khruu* Boonyong Gatekong. In contrast, the Saue Banlengsin was led by *Khruu* Prasit Intaraphiphat, a famous *ranaat eek* player from Suphan buri province, who was a pupil of a renowned *ranaat eek* player, *Khruu* Prasoeat Sotsaengchan.

From my perspective, both ensembles performed each *prachan* piece professionally. In particular, in the second part of their performance, between the *Tayoe Kameen* (*ทยอยเขมร*) (*thao*) and the *Choet Ciin* (*เชิดจีน*) pieces (DVD track 6 and 7), the audience and musicians alike were impressed with their musical competence. I was amazed by their performance, particularly during the competition. After the Sit-Reungnond had performed the *Tayoe Kameen* piece, they tried to respond to the Saue Banlengsin by using their new composition in the *haang phleeng* piece with the main melody of the Thai pop folk song '*Yom Phraban Chaoka*' (*ยมพระบาลเจ้าขา*). The meaning of this song's lyrics is 'asking for a prince of devils to bring this person to hell' (DVD Track 8). Interestingly, they used this Thai pop folk song as part of the *haang phleeng*. In order to broaden my mind about people's views on this *prachan* as well as to gain in-depth knowledge about their performance, I interviewed both MCs at this *prachan*

event, Mr. Anant Narkkong and Mr. Khomsun Suthon, a music scholar and Thai TV moderator, who had participated in *prachan* as MCs for several years. During the performance of these ensembles, Mr. Anant explained to me the way in which both groups performed *prachan* through musical response in between the *ranaat thum*'s players in the *Tayoe Khameen* and *Choet Ciin* pieces. I found that he considered *prachan* not only a professional performance, but also a way of challenging and stealing a march on, or gaining an advantage over, the other ensemble, as he explained:

> Did you see the way of performance of a *ranaat-thum* player of the Sit-Reungnond ensemble in the *Tayoe Khameen* previously? After I had declared that the next piece that the Saue Banlengsin ensemble was going to perform was *Choet Ciin,* then, he tried to show his virtuoso improvisation alongside several techniques on the *ranaat thum* in the *Tayoe Khameen* piece immediately. This is because that player knew full well that *Choet Ciin* was the piece that the other ensemble was going to play later. Admittedly, this piece is a technical piece that illustrates and tests the musical proficiency of the *ranaat thum* and *pii nai* players in improvisation. This is the reason why the *ranaat thum* player of the Sit-Reungnond group tried to show the complex improvisation and techniques of this instrument, as much as he could, in this piece, before the other player performed. This can be seen as a way of challenging and stealing a march on the other. In practice, this player was a genius in using this strategy and also in my view his improvisational style was quite impressive (Narkkong, music scholar, interview 6/09/2012).

On the other hand, I also asked Mr. Komson Suthon, another MC, his opinion of both performances. Interestingly, he favoured the Saue Banlengsin ensemble. He mentioned that he supported the Saue Banlengsin ensemble (orange T-Shirt), since he personally liked the skills and performance style of their *ranaat eek* player, nicknamed 'Ton'. He noticed that the performance style of this player was very similar to the style of *Khruu* Prasoeat Sotsaengchan, a renowned *ranaat eek* player from Suphan buri province. Mr. Komson liked the sound quality of Ton's performance; he was able to produce big sounds or full sound quality for every note on the *ranaat eek*, even at high speed.

Besides, he added that to be a good *ranaat eek* player a good appearance was also significant. A player should have attractive looks and hold his beaters elegantly and beautifully. These things are the elements of a good *ranaat eek* player. Furthermore, Mr. Komson also described the virtuoso character and techniques of Ton's performance in terms of holding the beater. He claimed that the way in which Ton held the beater in both hands had affected the sound quality of the *ranaat eek* considerably in the *Choet Ciin* piece. Hence, this was the reason why this player had performed better than the other at this *prachan*. He said:

> Can you hear this piece (*Choet Ciin*), you can see that this *ranaat eek* player is able to perform at high speed immediately at the beginning of this piece. He is able to play like this without warming-up his wrists. This is because he applies the physical power in combination between his arms and wrists together to play on this instrument. Moreover, have you ever realised that the way that this player holds his beater is also significant? When he holds his beater, in his left hand, he also uses the top of his finger press intensively on the handle. Hence, he is able to make the sound on his instrument louder and achieve full sound quality. For this reason, we can see that being a good *ranaat eek* player is not only about power or skills, it is also a trick that you can apply to the actual competition. It is not cheating, but it is a tactic (Suthon, interview 6/09/2012).

Even though Mr. Komson tried to explain the professional skill and sound quality of this player, some famous Thai music teachers had a different point of view. I also interviewed C, a famous music teacher, at this event about the performance of this *ranaat eek* player. He did not like the performance of Ton on the *ranaat eek*, and considered that he made an unpleasant sound. He argued, 'I do not like this player, since the sound of his *ranaat eek* performance was not bright, it was very dull'.

Figure 2.4: The Sit-Reungnond ensemble, led by *Khruu* Boonsrang Reungnond

Figure.2.5: The Saue Banlengsin ensemble, led by *Khruu* Prasit Intaraphiphat

In order to broaden my perception in the *prachan* at Wat Phra Phireen, I also interviewed some of the audience members regarding their perspectives and feelings about the *prachan*. I found that they had divergent perspectives on participating in *prachan* as well as favourite styles in *prachan* competitions. For instance, a Thai music student from the university noticed that she liked watching and listening to *prachan*. She stated that out of the second pair of *prachan*, she preferred the Kamlai ensemble to the Payuungsin ensemble, since it was a competition between male and female groups. Normally, everyone knows that female wrists or physical strength do not compare with that of males, so she was encouraging the female musicians. She added that in practice, the Kamlai ensemble had performed quite well compared with the other, even though most of them were female. Another audience member, a Thai Buddhist monk, aged forty-eight, who was sitting at the back of the audience, said that personally he liked listening to *prachan,* since he was impressed by the sound of the *ranaat eek.* So that was the reason why he had come to this temple. He noticed that in *prachan*, we consider which ensemble is better than the other by listening to the sound quality of the *ranaat eek.* In *prachan,* the *ranaat eek* sound has to be clear and sharp and it must be played at high-speed. Following this perspective, Klengklai Aaunsam-aang, a Thai music teacher from the College of Dramatic Arts, provided me with significant information about *prachan*. He argued that *prachan* was the way in which musicians and music teachers from different music schools tried to show their musical knowledge as well as musical competence. For example, in the first pair of *prachan*, the first ensemble tried to challenge the other by applying some part of the *Kraao Nai* solo piece in the course of the *haang phleeng* piece. In contrast, the other ensemble tried to respond by performing some part of the *Tayoe Diaw* solo piece in the course of the main piece. He said that he liked *prachan*, since it was very challenging to his knowledge in terms of how to respond musically to the opponents.

One of the surprising answers given during my interviews at this temple was when I asked two vendors regarding their participation in and impressions of the *wai khruu* and the *prachan.* I walked around the temple during the *prachan* event and interviewed a woman vendor selling noodle soup. I asked her about the *wai khruu* and the *prachan* while she cooked noodle soup for me. She said that the reason why so many people participated in the *prachan* at this temple was because there were famous superstars and artists who always came to the *wai khruu* event at this temple every year. Hence, people wanted to see these famous actors and performers. Moreover, she also claimed that she liked *prachan* events because of the economic aspect: 'I like *prachan*, since I am able to sell a large amount of my noodle soup, and it happens only once a year'. I also interviewed another male vendor, who was also selling noodle soup, close to the vending cart of the first one. He claimed that he liked listening to *prachan* because the *Phau Kae* (Old Father)*,* one of the gods of music, liked listening to it. He said that as he respected *Phau Kae,* he liked what *Phau Kae* liked. In addition, surprisingly, when I asked both vendors how we could judge which ensemble was better in the *prachan*, the female vendor said:

> I would understand which ensemble is better than the other by the sounds of the audience. If I heard an ensemble gain a big round of applause or cheering sounds from the audience, I would perceive the result of the *prachan* immediately… who is good at the performance (Female vender 6/09/2012).

On the other hand, a male vendor argued that he liked *prachan* since its rhythmic pattern was fascinating. Nevertheless, he was not able to explain this. He just bowed his head and moved his hand like a drunken man, following the rhythmic pattern of the *klong khaek* (a pair of Thai double-headed drums), which were being played by the performers on stage. Then, he said 'yeal yeal *prachan* sound is like this….'.

Turning back to Mr. Komson, a *prachan* MC, he claimed that the reason why he liked *prachan* was because it broadened his mind in terms of finding out about new compositions, new techniques and new ideas about *prachan* from music teachers and musicians. In particular, he liked gaining new ideas about composition in the *thaang plian* (*ทางเปลี่ยน*) or new arrangements of the musical pieces in each movement, as well as ideas about *kaan prub wong* (*การปรับวง*) or the orchestration. He added that it seemed that we were there to listen to something different from ordinary Thai music. We had gone there to listen to how they think in music, how they improve or create something new in Thai classical music through *prachan*. Moreover, Mr. Komson provided his view concerning the *prachan* at the Wat Phra Phireen temple. He claimed, 'It is not true… if somebody mentioned that this music competition is only for playing or showing respect to the gods of music and the spirits of Thai music masters. In practice, they compete with each other seriously in music through their performance, which is considered an intense *prachan*. So, this is the reason why they come to this temple'.

To my surprise, after interviewing and observing the duty of the MCs in the *prachan* competition, I realised that not only were both MCs knowledgeable and experienced in terms of music competitions, but also they were the major factor affecting the *prachan* performance and the conflicts between the musical ensembles. For instance, after both ensembles had finished the second piece, before starting the solo piece, both MCs attempted to provoke both the musicians' and people's feelings about the *prachan* competition by asking for their opinions and feelings about the *ranaat eek* players in both ensembles on the stage. In my view, it seemed that both MCs were trying to play a psychological game with the musicians in both groups. Mr. Anant started arousing emotions by asking Mike, a *ranaat eek player* in the Sit-Reungnond ensemble, 'What do you think? Did Ton (a *ranaat eek* player in the Saue Banlengsin ensemble) perform well?'. At first, Mike looked a bit shocked at this unexpected

question. However, in the end he nodded his head and answered the MC, 'Yes, he performed quite well'. Then, Mr. Anant continued by asking another question 'What score would you give his performance?' Mike said suddenly, 'I would give him full marks – 100'. At this moment, many audience members were surprised and made the sound, 'Oh…' together. On the other hand, after Mike had given his answer, Mr. Komson, who was on the other side of the stage, immediately asked Ton, the *ranaat eek* player in the Saue Banlengsin ensemble, the same question. Ton responded suddenly, 'I would give him 120 marks'. In response to this the MCs and the audience exclaimed, 'Oh… ho', while smiling and laughing at the answers given by both players. Unpredictably, after the provocation by the MCs, before starting the third part of the competition (solo part), both players declared to the audience that after this match they would like to compete against each other at another *prachan*. In the third part of the *prachan*, the solo part for the *ranaat eek* player, Mike played a solo piece *Toi Ruup* (*saam chan*) on the *ranaat eek*, showing his talent by playing smooth and bright quality sounds with stunning musical techniques (DVD track 9). In contrast, Ton played a solo piece *Anu* (*thao*), illustrating his musical competence with big, full sound quality at high speed on the *ranaat eek* (DVD track 10). In the end, both ensembles, particularly the *ranaat eek* players, received a big round of applause from the audience and their fan clubs.

After the performance, I interviewed Ton (Mr. Rattanaphon Wisudthiwong), the twenty-three-year-old *ranaat eek* player from the Saue Banlengsin ensemble, regarding his performance. Ton noted that he had started learning music when he was seven years old. He had performed *piiphaat* music for many years. However, this was his first time performing *prachan*, particularly on the prestigious stage at Wat Phra Phireen. He claimed that this stage was quite different from his previous experience, since he had had to perform with the opponents formally in front of a large audience. He noted:

> On the stage I was excited, particularly when I heard the sound of the opponent's performance. I thought that he was quite good and competent on the *ranaat eek*. At that moment, I wondered whether or not I could beat him… Since I did not want to be under pressure on my own, I tried to deny listening to his performance. However, after finishing the solo piece, I felt released from my burden. Now I am very pleased that I did well in my performance on stage (Wisudthiwong 6/09/2012).

He claimed that in order to prepare for the *prachan* at this temple, he had been training himself for three months, constantly training his wrists and patience on the *ranaat-eek* in the *Moolong* piece for at least one hour at a time. He kept practising this form every day in the morning and evening. Regarding conflict in *prachan*, Ton believed that musicians are very sensitive in terms of expression in their behaviour and manner. They try to think of other musicians might challenge them with their musical sound and behaviour. However, in his view, he did not think like that; he considered *prachan* as an advanced training stage. He felt that performing *prachan* encouraged musicians to develop their musical skills to an advanced level rather than causing conflict. In addition to this, since he was very impressed by this music competition, he was willing to perform *prachan* again to proclaim his musical competence to the public: 'After this event, I want to have a *prachan* again. I want everyone to know me and to know what is the standard and the right way of performing the *ranaat eek* well'.

Fourth pair:

One of the *prachan* performances at Wat Phra Phireen that really impressed me in regard to the concept of *prachan* was the *prachan* between the Kunchaun Duriya and the Sit-Thonghlore. At that time, it was around four o'clock in the morning, but the last pair of *prachan* was still continuing. The audience and musicians were still waiting attentively for the last significant match. Both ensembles, apparently, are very proficient

in *prachan* music, since they have virtuoso musicians on each instrument. They demonstrated several techniques on every instrument alongside the *haang phleeng* piece to respond to each other. The most interesting thing about both ensembles was the way in which they tried to respond to each other by playing a western musical instrument and dramatic show to the *prachan*. In the first piece played by the Kunchaun Duriya ensemble, called *Bulan* (บุหลัน) (*thao*) – one of the main *prachan piiphaat seepha* pieces in the *probkai* repertoire – they instantly introduced a new style of performance by using a drum kit to perform alongside other *piiphaat* musical instruments in their *haang phleeng* piece in the Khmer dialect. On the other hand, the Sit-Thonghlore ensemble, in their performance of the *Champanari* (จำปานารี) (*thao*) piece, responded to their opponents by using a bass drum to accompany their *piiphaat* ensemble in the introductory *hua phleeng* piece before coming to the main piece. Apparently, each ensemble tried to respond to the other by illustrating the sounds of western musical instruments to accompany their ensemble. Arguably, the way in which they incorporated these western musical instruments into their performance gave rise to a new sound and musical style of *prachan*. In other words, when the sounds and rhythmic pattern of a drum kit or bass drum are combined with the sounds of Thai musical instruments in the *hua phleeng* (หัวเพลง) or *haang phleeng* (หางเพลง) pieces, the sounds of *prachan* music and its characteristics are changed. Moreover, a striking feature of the *prachan* of both ensembles was the involvement of a dramatic show during the *prachan*. In the second part (*tayoe* repertoire) of the *prachan*, when the Kunchaun Duriya performed the *Tayoe Yuan* (ทยอยญวณ) piece, during the *haang phleeng* piece in *yuan* dialect, a performer dressed as Brahman came out from backstage. Then he walked around the stage, blessing the musicians and audience by sprinkling water on the people. In contrast, the Sit-Thonghlore responded to their opponents by having a male comedian dressed as a woman in a black skirt performing a funny dance during the

haang phleeng piece in the course of the *Talay Baa* (ทะเลบ้า) (*thao*) piece. At that time, I was astonished by those performances as well as being curious about the interplay between music and dance performance during *prachan.* With respect to this, it might be said that applying western musical instruments to accompany a *piiphaat* ensemble as well as a dramatic show and dance in the music competition might be another feature of *prachan* competitions at present. In this respect, we might reconsider the meaning of *prachan* in a new approach. In the competition between the Kunchaun Duriya and the Sit-Thonghlore, arguably the *prachan* did not depend only on their musical proficiency, but also included the idea of applying music in different ways to represent themselves and respond to others in the competition.

Another aspect that must be borne in mind is the fact that the response from the audience at this *prachan* was very significant. I was very interested in the audience's response to those ensembles. Even though the new presentations by the Kunchaun Duriya and the Sit-Thonghlore ensembles at the *prachan* were quite unexpected and unpleasant for me, they received a big round of applause from the audience and some of the musicians. Some of the audience members provided a reward by hanging Thai garlands and Thai notes on either the musical instruments or the musicians' necks during their performance. In my view, I felt that sometimes the performers tried to entertain the audience more than focusing on the *prachan* itself, since they knew quite well that that was what the audience preferred. They might consider that foreign or western musical instruments helped their ensemble and Thai instruments in terms of supporting the rhythmic pattern and style of the *haang phleeng* piece to be more entertaining for the audience. It seemed that the audience enjoyed listening to and watching this style of *prachan* rather than a formal one. From this point of view, it can be said that the response of the audience affected the way in which the musicians performed and responded to each other enormously.

From the *prachan* at Wat Phra Phireen, I found that the concept of *prachan* is related to the *wai khruu* ceremony. In *prachan*, the trend of applying *hua phleeng* and *haang phleeng* pieces before and after the main piece is esteemed very highly among *prachan* musicians. Moreover, they also used those together with some parts of the solo pieces, such as *Kraao Nai,* in order to challenge or respond to the other ensemble. Besides, the context of this event was marvellous, because, beyond the competition itself, the involvement of the audience, MCs, vendors, monks, music agents sound engineer, and particularly the fan clubs and groupies was significant, and made the competition even more intense and enjoyable.

Prachan Wat Sriprawat

After participating in the *prachan* at Wat Phra Phireen, I looked for other Thai music competitions in Bangkok to broaden my mind in regard to the concept and process of *prachan*. Hence, I decided to participate in the *prachan* at Wat Sriprawat on 20 October 2012. By coincidence, I heard the news regarding the *prachan* at Wat Sriprawat from musicians at the Fine Arts Department and Wat Phra Phireen. They recommended that I participate in this event, since it also included musicians from different provinces, which is different from Wat Phra Phireen, which is usually based on musicians from Bangkok. Besides, even though that year was the first year of organizing a *prachan* at this temple, it was very popular in Thai music circles, since the host of this event, *Khruu* Surapong-Rohitajon (known as *Khruu* Jeeap), is a well-known *piiphaat* musician at the Fine Arts Department of Bangkok. Therefore, many musicians and audience members participated in this event to show their musical proficiency and broaden their views in terms of performing and listening to *prachan* music in different styles and with different ideas.

Before the competition, I determined to participate in the rehearsals of the Sit-Reoungnon ensemble, one of the ensembles invited to this *prachan* event, to gain in-depth information about the *prachan* concept and strategy. This ensemble is led by *Khruu* Boonsang Reungnond (known as *Khruu* Puu), an adept musician and famous music teacher working at the Fine Arts Department of Bangkok. I participated in the rehearsal of the Sit-Reoungnon music school in order to perceive the way in which the musicians think about *prachan*, as well as their musical strategy and way of life. The way in which I applied the participant observation method to the rehearsal provided me with significant knowledge of *prachan* and its implications in relation to Thai musical society and culture. The *prachan* rehearsals and participant observation will be described in detail in Chapter 4.

When I arrived at Wat Sriprawat at around 1:30pm, I first met *Khruu* Phachern Kongchoke (known as *Khruu* Chaen), a *piiphaat* specialist at the Fine Arts Department and one of the famous musicians from the Duriyapraniit music school. *Khruu* Chaen had come to listen to the *prachan* at this temple, since some musicians from the Fine Arts Department were to be involved in this performance. So, I interviewed him regarding the definition of *prachan* and its relevance. He kindly explained to me in detail the relationships between *prachan piiphaat seephaa* and ritual. He argued that *prachan piiphaat seephaa* was irrelevant to Thai funerals, but was related specifically to the *wai khruu* ceremony and the specific events required by the host. After interviewing him, I walked into the large open-air pavilion inside the temple where the *prachan* would take place that night. Then, I conducted an informal interview with *Khruu* Jeeap, a host of this *prachan* event, regarding the purpose of the *prachan* at this temple. He claimed that he was planning to use this temple as a base or centre of *prachan* competitions in Bangkok, beyond Wat Phra Phireen, every year. The *prachan* that would take place that night was a part of *wan suk dib,* the day of preparing

elaborate food offerings and a place for the gods. This is the day before the formal *wai khruu* ritual. He added that traditionally musical performance and plays took place on the preparation day for the formal *wai khruu* ritual. *Khruu* Jeeap claimed that the framework of the *prachan* at this temple was that each ensemble would perform two pieces: one piece from the *probkai* repertoire and one piece from the *tayoe* repertoire. However, at this *prachan*, musicians were allowed to solo freely in the course of the *prachan* pieces. In other words, all of the ensembles were allowed to create solo parts in each *prachan* piece as they wished (at some *prachan* events, the host restricts the addition or creation of solo sections in *prachan* pieces, since they are afraid of conflict between ensembles or music schools). With regard to the definition of *prachan*, he said that this word is like a holy word. It has a powerful meaning for all musicians, since it identifies the degree of musicians' musical skills. He stated that the musicians, or whoever would like to participate in the *prachan* competition, must have proper, complete musical ability. He claimed that *prachan* was about far more than just memorizing the pieces. It also includes musical strategies and creativity as well as finding a way of outwitting others.

After interviewing *Khruu* Jeeap, the time was around 2pm. I walked around the temple to observe the area and the *prachan* surroundings. I saw many musicians and music teachers eating and drinking at the table by the kitchen close to the pavilion. They comprised musicians from different music schools and institutions or those related to them, for instance, musicians from the *Khruu* Sakon Kaewpenguard and Ruam Phrhomburi music schools, the Fine Arts Department, Music Division - Culture, Sports and Tourism Department/Bangkok, the College of Dramatic Arts etc. Moreover, some adept musicians and respected music teachers in Thai music circles, who in practice rarely attend *prachan* events at present, also participated in this event. Unexpectedly, two of my music teachers in Thai classical flute (*klui*) and drum (*klong*), *Khruu* Suwat

Auttagrit and Uthai Panprayoon, from the Fine Arts Department, also participated in this event. Both of them sat at the table with the other musicians near the kitchen on the right side of the pavilion stage. They kindly invited me to sit and have some food with them at the table while recalling our memories of Thai music and *prachan*. At that moment, I was thinking that this music competition was like a family day consisting of many musicians, music teachers and students. Some of them had not seen each other for a year or more, because of their work or due to moving house, but they had come together at this event. At that time, around 4:30pm, an auspicious ceremony for this event was going to take place on stage. Buddhist monks came to the pavilion, and the host and musicians invited them gently to sit on the stage in sequence. Then, the host, musicians and audience in that area sat in front of the monks and pressed their hands together on their chest. In the ceremony, the monks blessed and chanted the instruction of Buddha and also asked the audience to chant along and repeat the sacred sentences of instruction. The blessing also included the chanting of the Buddhist instruction asking people to obey the five Buddhist precepts, including prohibiting killing, stealing, committing adultery, lying, and drinking alcohol. However, the intriguing thing was that after the monks had finished the ceremony and left the pavilion (with a *piiphaat* music accompaniment), the musicians just turned back to their table, closed the pavilion, and entertained themselves by drinking many bottles of beer and spirits while conversing within their group. It seemed that even though the musicians had just accepted the five Buddhist precepts, particularly that prohibiting drinking alcohol, they did not apply this to their lives in reality. At around 7:20pm, before the *prachan* started, the Wat Sriprawat temple suddenly became overcrowded. It seemed that people were arriving at the temple continuously. Apparently, they came from different music schools or institutions, particularly musicians and ensembles from the College of Dramatic Arts, from different provinces such as Bangkok, Ang Thong, Sukhothai, etc.

When I participated in the *prachan* at Wat Sriprawat, I found at first that the performance structure and process were somewhat different from that at Wat Phra Phireen, even though the *prachan* framework and concept at this temple were similar. The *prachan* at Wat Sriprawat that night consisted of six ensembles. However, these ensembles were separated into two groups, each of which consisted of three ensembles. In other words, it was a *prachan* between three ensembles in each group. Before the *prachan*, the players had to draw lots to determine who would play in the first or second group and also who was to be the first, second and third ensemble respectively in each group. The first group (group A) included Rachaphat Phranakhoon University, The College of Dramatic Arts of Lopburi and the Hlaansit-Keetkhong ensembles, while the second group (group B) consisted of the Sit-Reungnond, The College of Dramatic Arts of Ang Thong, and the Kunchaun Duriya ensembles. In the competition, those three ensembles had to perform their music in sequence from the first ensemble to the third ensemble (from left to right) for each repertoire. In this competition, the *prachan* pieces did not have solo parts apart from those in the *probkai* and *tayoe* repertoires, unlike the previous event. Arguably, at this event I learned to understand the different processes of *prachan* and the musicians' way of thinking in responding to music through the method and strategies of *prachan.*

The *prachan* that night started with the performance of a famous *piiphaat* ensemble, which officially inaugurated the competition. This ensemble was led by *ranaat eek* superstar, Thawisak Akarawong (known as 'Beng'), from the Fine Arts department. He performed the *Rua Pralong Seephaa*[26] (*รัวประลองเสภา*) piece followed by the *Hoomroong Phma Wat* **(***โหมโรงพม่าวัด***)** (the overture) piece. Then he performed the *Phma Haathon* **(***พม่าห้าท่อน***)** (*hok chan*) piece, after which he received a big round of applause from the musicians and the audience. After that the *prachan* continued with

[26] In the tradition of *prachan* competitions, musicians usually play the *Rua Phralong Seephaa* piece before the *hoomroong* repertoire as an introductory piece.

the performance of each ensemble of each group. Arguably, the *prachan* at Wat Sriprawat was quite different from that at Wat Phra Phireen, since the ensembles were from several provinces associated with the College of Dramatic Arts. Moreover, the musicians, from my interviews, claimed that *prachan* with three ensembles on stage, as at this temple, was less stressful than *prachan* with two. However, during the *prachan*, I felt that the musicians in each ensemble were still under pressure. It seemed that before the *prachan*, the *ranaat eek* players tried to warm their wrists by practising on their *ranaat eek*, with the tower covered on top of the instrument. Interestingly, it seemed to be a trend for most of the *ranaat eek* players at this event to warm their wrists in the back of their pickup truck or cargo van. This mostly took place out of sight in a quiet area of the temple. When I observed the musicians' behaviour and emotions while waiting for their performance, I felt that they were relatively serious about this performance.

At the *prachan*, the second group in the competition, B, comprised the Sit-Reungnond, The College of Dramatic Arts of Ang Thong, and the Kunchaun Duriya ensembles. During the competition I interviewed a musician from the Sit-Reungnond ensemble about their concept and strategy in the competition. I saw a young *ranaat eek* player, Mike, warming up his wrists by using his beaters to practise a musical piece on the *ranaat eek* in a quiet, out-of-sight area in the back of the cargo van, while his friends were standing outside. While Mike was practising, I felt that he was seriously warming up his wrists on the *ranaat eek*. Non, a drummer of the Sit-Reungnond, tried to explain Mike's feelings and his band's situation in the competition. Non said that Mike was feeling stressed about his coming performance in the *tayoe* repertoire part in the next round. He added that his band's situation was very intense and serious, because of the increasing speed of each ensemble in the performance. This is one of the challenging ideas in *prachan*, that traditionally when an ensemble plays at some speed, the next

ensemble has to respond at the same speed or faster to show their musical ability. Moreover, it is also the nature of the performance of Thai musicians that in each piece, the speed of their performance increases gradually. Relating to this competition, this *prachan* was a competition between three ensembles on stage, of which the Sit-Reungnond was the first. Then, when the second and third ensembles performed, the speed of each ensemble increased automatically. Certainly, when the third ensemble performed, and then it came to the second round (*tayoe* repertoire) of the first ensemble performance played by the Sit-Reungnond, the performance speed would be very fast and unpredictable. According to this, Non noticed that during our conversation, the third ensemble (Kunchaun Duriya) was performing and their speed was gradually increasing. Since now the first part or first repertoire of the *prachan* was going to finish soon, the next performance, the second round, would return to his ensemble (Sit-Reungnond). This is why Mike, the *ranaat eek* player, was worrying about the speed of his band's performance. In *prachan* music, musicians are mostly not able to bear to perform at the same or a lower speed than their opponents. Moreover, the *ranaat eek* is the leader of the ensemble, so Mike had to lead his ensemble at a faster speed whilst at the same time keeping up his standard in term of applying his musical techniques to his performance. It is very challenging for a *ranaat eek* player and ensemble to perform speedily in order to respond to their rivals. This is why Mike had to warm up his wrists on the *ranaat eek* as much as he could in order to lead his band and be ready for an unexpected circumstance in the performance of the next round. In the end, even though there was an unexpected situation in the performance for the Sit-Reungnond, they were very successful in their performance, which prompted cheering and clapping from the audience. They were admired by the audience and other musicians as having good teamwork and a clear performance. As mentioned above, in *prachan,* traditionally the speed or performance has to be superior to that of the other ensemble, and the challenge

is to respond spontaneously to unpredictable performances by others. In respect to the audience's opinions in regard to the *prachan* at Wat Sriprawat, the response from the audience was varied and contradictory. Intriguingly, I saw several musicians, music masters and students participate in this event as audience members to offer their comments and critiques of the performance to the other ensembles besides their own.

Arguably, the most striking feature of this *prachan* event was the performance of the last two ensembles. At the end of this event, I was surprised and excited by the unexpected conflict in the music between the Ang Thong College of Dramatic Arts and Kunchaun Duriya. When the Ang Thong College of Dramatic Arts ensemble challenged the other one by presenting small solo parts from the *Kraao Nai* and *Tayoe Diaw* pieces – two high level and status solo pieces – in the course of the *Bungbai* (บังใบ) (*thao*), the Kunchaun Duriya ensemble became irritated by their mastery of the performance piece. Hence, they responded by employing various musical techniques and some parts of small pieces in their *haang phleeng* after performing the main piece *Tayoe-Yuan* (*thao*) in their performance. Significantly, the small pieces in the *haang phleeng* in their performance – for instance *Ram Dab* (รำดาบ), *Jaosen* (เจ้าเซ็น), *Choet* (เชิด), *Oat* (โอด), *Kraao Ram* (กราวรำ), and *Faichum* (ไฟชุม) – have implications and meaning in terms of fighting in Thai musical culture (DVD track 11). It seems that the Kunchaun Duriya intentionally performed the set of fighting pieces in order to defeat their rivals. Furthermore, they also used physical movement to annoy their opponents during the performance. Apparently, the intense competition greatly excited the audience. They responded to each performance by shouting loudly. For instance they shouted 'Hey, hey…go go!' during the *Choet* piece, and '*Chaiyo Chaiyo*' (a celebration sound) during the *Kraao Ram* piece, etc. It might be said that they were satisfied by the performance and were shouting and applauding the way in which the musicians challenged and responded to each other. At that moment, I heard some excited audience members

saying, ‘Oh, ferociously, today this ensemble (Kunchaun Duriya) comes out with the whole set of attacking (pieces)’. Another audience member shouted, ‘Burn them, burn them…’, when the ensemble applied the same part of *Fai Chum* to the *luukhmot* piece at the end of their performance. At that time, I felt that the audience was greatly excited by the *prachan.* Even though it was around 5:30am when the host announced the end of the music competition, the audience did not seem satisfied. They shouted, ‘no, no, we do not want to finish… continue… one more, one more’, many times. However, the host refused, since he was afraid of conflict between the ensembles. Moreover, at that time, almost 6am, he had to consider his neighbourhood around the temple, since they had already performed *prachan* all night. He decided to end the event by calling a representative of each *prachan* ensemble to come to the front of the stage to receive a certificate of honour for their participation and to have a photograph taken together.

Figure 2.6: The Kunchaun Duriya ensemble performing a set of fighting pieces in the *haang phleeng* after performing the *Tayoe Yuan* piece, in response to the performance by the Ang Thong College of Dramatic Arts ensemble during the *prachan* at Wat Sriprawat

Prachan Ngaan Loy Krathong Ratchaburi

It was my good fortune that I found out about the *prachan* Ngaan Loy-Krathong festival in Ratchaburi province from the Sit-Reungnond ensemble during the *prachan* event at Wat Sriprawat. I was interested in this event, since it was an intense music competition between two ensembles: the Sit-Reungnond and the Thai-Banlaeng. Moreover, this competition was part of the celebrations for the Loy-Krathong festival in Ratchaburi province; in practice it is quite rare to find a *prachan* competition at this kind of event nowadays. Hence, I decided to undertake fieldwork at this event by following the Sit-Reungnond ensemble. The *prachan* Ngaan Loy-Krathong Ratchaburi took place on 28 November 2012 and was held on a floating raft on the Maeklong river. The setting created an intense competition, as did the structure of the competition, which pitted only two ensembles against each other, the Sit-Reungnond versus the Thai-Banlaeng. They sat beside each other on the stage in front of the audience, who were standing and sitting on the other side of the river bank. The Sit-Reungnond was led by *Khruu* Boonsang Reungnond, while the Thai Banlaeng was led by *Khruu* Saman Gaewlaeiat. The setting and environment of the *prachan* made both ensembles focus more seriously on their performance. Implicitly, it also added great dignity to the competition between the musicians, who came from different areas and music schools: Bangkok versus Samute-Songkram province (Sit-Reungnond versus Thai-Banlaeng). When I arrived at the Maeklong river, by following the Sit-Reungnond ensemble, to observe this *prachan*, upon taking my first step onto the floating raft I experienced a tense and unpleasant atmosphere created by the pressure felt by the musicians in both ensembles. They did not talk to each other for a long time when they saw each other on the floating raft. Both ensembles were very quiet, which immediately conveyed to me that they were rivals.

Figure 2.7: *Khruu* Boonsang Reungnond and his pupils waiting for a boat to take them to the floating raft on the Maeklong river for the *prachan* at the Ngaan Loy-Krathong Ratchaburi festival 2012

Figure 2.8: *Khruu* Boonsang Reungnond (Sit-Reungnond ensemble) and *Khruu* Saman Gaewlaeiat (Thai Banlaeng ensemble) negotiating about the *prachan* before the competition began

In my view, the *prachan* at this event started when the ensembles had a sound check together. It might be said that their musical strategy in *prachan* was applied during the sound check even before the competition. During the sound check, the Sit-Reuangnond tested the sound of their ensemble and each instrument with microphones with the help of the event staff. However, I was surprised that the musicians who played on the musical instruments to test the microphones were not the same musicians that had rehearsed in the Sit-Reuangnond music school before the event. For instance, the *ranaat eek* player testing the microphone was not F - one of the senior *ranaat eek* players at the Reuangnond music school - but Mike, a junior *ranaat eek* player from this school, who usually played percussion when they had rehearsals. Furthermore, a *ranaat thum* player and a *khong wong yai* player from the Sit-Reuangnond exchanged their instruments when they did the sound check. The reason why they had to do this was because they knew full well that their rivals would assess their style, speed and musical techniques during the sound check. Therefore, *Khruu* Boonsang Reungnond used a strategy to outwit his rivals (Thai-Banlaeng) before the competition, using different musicians to conduct the sound check instead of the real professional musicians who would perform in the competition.

Compellingly, from my experience, this strategy is very similar to a story that my music teacher, *Khruu* Pinit Chaisuwan, a Thai National Artist 1997,[27] told me when I was a *prachan* musician from 2001 to 2003. He claimed that in his lifetime, at *prachan*, musicians outwitted each other by trapping opponents through using a delegate to play the *ranaat eek* in the first piece to test or observe the response from their opponents. After perceiving the *prachan* situation and estimating the style and skills of their rivals, they would reveal the real *ranaat eek* player to their opponents and the audience. My music teacher said that they had to do this often in the past, since music schools were

[27] *Khruu* Pinit Chaisuwan (1931 - present) is a respected music master, great musician and composer in Thai music circles at present.

highly competitive. Furthermore, he stressed that this is one way in which musicians try to get the better of each other in competitions.

When the *prachan* started, it seemed that the performance between those ensembles became increasingly intense. This *prachan* comprised three parts, consisting of three pieces from different types of music repertoire: the *hoomrong* (the overture), the *probkai*, and the *tayoe*. In each repertoire, the two ensembles had to perform their pieces alternately**.** The Sit-Reuangnond started the competition with the '*Rao Pralong Seephaa*' or introductory piece followed by the overture '*Hoomroong Aiyareet*' (โหมโรงไอยเรศ) (from the *hoomroong* repertoire) to show their musical competence by means of a high-level speed performance and their orchestration (DVD track 12). Then, after the Sit-Reuangnond's first piece, the Thai Banlaeng responded to them by performing the *hua phleeng*[28] with a solo on each musical instrument. Then they played the *Rao Prolong Seephaa* and *Hoomroong Chalongchai Thai Banlaeng* (โหมโรงฉลองชัยไทยบรรเลง), which is an overture piece, to introduce their ensemble to the public (DVD track 13).

During their performance, I saw music teachers from both ensembles trying to listen to the performance of the other one, and giving instructions to their own musicians on how to respond to or outwit their opponents by playing or communicating in music in different styles and techniques spontaneously. I was also watching and listening to the performances carefully to ascertain the way in which they tried to communicate with each other in regard to the music and meaning through the sounds, techniques, and pieces on the stage. The competition was gradually intensifying, and *Khruu* Boonsang, a music teacher from the Sit-Reungnond, started creating a musical strategy in the *probkai* repertoire to respond to and challenge his rivals. During the Thai-Banlaeng's performance of the *Hoomroong Chalongchai Thai Banlaeng* piece, *Khruu* Boonsang began to develop a strategy to respond to the Thai Banlaeng by

[28] *Hua phleeng* is a small introductory piece that is performed before a main piece such as a piece from the *probkai* or *tayoe* repertoire in *prachan*

playing the *Phan Farang* (*thao*) piece from the *probkai* repertoire. Then, he told his student, 'Bai, listen to me! The next piece we are going to perform is *Phan Farang* (*thao*), so you have to set up your drum pattern in the fast tempo at the beginning, then give a signal to F to perform the *ranaat eek* to speed up the tempo, understand?' Then he said, 'I would like to know how they (Thai-Banlaeng) can follow and respond to my piece at this high speed'.

Figure 2.9: *Khruu* Boonsrang watching the performance of the Thai Banlaeng ensemble during the *prachan* at the Ngaan Loy Krathong Ratchaburi festival 2012

Figure 2.10: *Khruu* Boonsang telling his pupils about a musical strategy to respond to the Thai Banlaeng during the *prachan*

Unpredictably, when the performance turned to the Thai-Banlaeng, *Khruu* Saman conducted a strategy to respond to the formal ensemble by asking his pupils not to follow the Sit-Reuangnond's performance speed. Rather, he asked his musicians to play each note of the melody clearly at a certain speed. In particular, the *ranaat eek* player had to control the tempo and make his melody clearer in that piece. Regarding the sounds and speed of his rival's performance, he claimed later that he disagreed with playing at a fast tempo, since it made the melody less clear. The Thai Banlaeng responded to their rivals with this strategy in the *Don Jaedii* (ดอนเจดีย์) (*thao*) piece. This piece with *hua phleeng* and *haang phleeng* is a mixture of both *phma* (Burmese) and *farang* (western marching style) and also has implications in terms of fighting (DVD track 14). From this point on, the competition became increasingly intense, since the Sit-Reuangnond responded aggressively to the Thai Banlaeng in the *tayoe* repertoire with their highest speed performance in the *Tayoe Nai* to show their superior musical proficiency and strength. Furthermore, they challenged their opponents by playing the *haang phleeng,* introduced through their new small composititon, followed by the *Sarama Thai* (สะระหม่าไทย) piece by showing the sounds of the *pii chawa* (ปี่ชวา) (a small quadruple-reed shawm), *ching* (ฉิ่ง) (a pair of small cymbals*)* and *klong khaek* (กลองแขก) (a pair of double-headed drums). Then, they played the *Choet Khaek* (เชิดแขก) piece followed by the solo on the *ranaat eek* in the *Choet* piece in the *haang phleeng*. They played those pieces in order to show their intention to fight with and kill their rivals before finishing their performance with the *luukhmot* (DVD track 15). At that time, when I heard the last two pieces, I instinctively knew that the Sit-Reuangnond would want to outdo and defeat the other ensemble.

During the performance of the Sit-Reuangnond, I also interviewed *Khruu* Saman about his feelings regarding those two pieces from the Sit-Reuangnond. He said that he knew that the Sit-Reuangnond would perform those pieces, but he was not worried,

since he had prepared some strategic and powerful pieces to respond to them. It seemed that at that moment the *prachan* was intensified through the musical response from both ensembles. However, before the Thai Banlaeng could start a new piece to respond to the Sit-Reuangnond, rain began to fall. Even though there was heavy rain, *Khruu* Saman was still very willing to continue his performance in order to respond to the challenge from the Sit-Reuangnond. This is because he was afraid that the audience might misunderstand and believe that his band was not able to respond and was the loser. However, his attempt was not successful, since the event staff would not allow him to perform because of the weather conditions. Hence, the *prachan* had to end immediately.

To me, the most interesting feature of this *prachan* was that I conducted interviews with Thai music teachers from both ensembles during the competition, in which I deliberately raised sensitive and challenging questions, for instance, 'What do you think about the performance of the other group?' 'How do you respond to the pieces of the other group in this moment?' and 'How do you overcome the other group in your performance?' It seemed that this method worked well at this *prachan*, since it helped me to perceive the ensembles' *prachan* strategies, their way of outwitting the other group in their performance, and their feelings during an intense *prachan* situation. Nevertheless, an unexpected situation occurred to me after applying this method. In the second part of competition, in the *probkai* repertoire, when the Thai Banlaeng ensemble were playing the *Don Jedii* (*thao*) piece, I saw that *Khruu* Boonsang (Sit-Reungnond ensemble) was listening to their performance carefully. Therefore, I started asking him again about his opinion and strategy in terms of how he would respond to them in the next piece. Unexpectedly, when I asked him, he did not answer me as usual; instead he looked at me with no facial expression and asked me directly, 'What did they (Thai-Banlaeng) say to the performance of my ensemble?' At that moment, I was surprised by his question, and realized that I was in a precarious circumstance. I realized that my

response might affect the *prachan* result and lead to conflict between the two ensembles. Hence, I decided not to respond to him and remained silent. Fortunately, when he saw that I was not able to respond to him, he seemed to understand my circumstance as a researcher and did not ask me again.

From the *prachan* between the Sit-Reuangnond and the Thai Banlaeng ensembles, we can see that each ensemble tried to outdo and defeat the other with different strategies. It seems that they had different perspectives in terms of strategy, style and criteria to judge how to overcome the other ensemble at the *prachan*. It is different in terms of the way of responding and communicating musically, particularly with regard to the matter of musical speeds and sounds. The two ensembles responded to each other mainly through the *hua phleeng* and the *haang phleeng*. In particular, in the *haang phleeng*, they tried to use pieces that have a specific meaning with foreign dialects to respond or communicate with each other. At this *prachan*, since it was a competition showing both musical competence and intelligence, the audience were totally convinced and impressed by the great performances. Besides, both ensembles believed that they were the deserving winner or that they had played better than the other. From this point of view, in regard to all of the *prachans* in which I participated during my fieldwork, I now ask the questions, 'in practice do we have an actual winner in *prachan or* music competitions?' and 'How do *prachan* and the definition of the winner work in Thai musical society?'

Prachan 11th *Piiphaat Seephaa*-tii-Wang Naa

Another *prachan piiphaat seephaa* that must be borne in mind in my fieldwork is the *prachan* '11th *Piiphaat Seephaa*-tii-Wang Naa' 2013. This music competition took place on 7 January 2013. It is the most famous *prachan* and has taken place every year at the Department of Fine Arts of Bangkok (Krom Silpakorn) since 2003. It is a

memorial event to recall and show gratitude to King Pinklao,[29] the second King in the reign of King Rama IV or King Mongkut[30] (1804-1868) in the Chakri dynasty. Apart from being the second king, who had the most military power over Siam (Thailand) at that time, he was also the most influential king. He was fascinated by music and a great supporter of traditional Thai music. The most significant aspect of this *prachan* is the music competition between six Thai official institutions, including four military bands (the Royal Thai Navy, the Royal Thai Army, the Royal Thai Air Force as well as the Royal Thai Police), the Fine Arts Department of Thailand, and the Music Division - Culture, Sports and Tourism Department/Bangkok. This event is one of the significant *prachans* in Thai music circles, since it is a competition that gathers all of the well-known and skilful musicians from six official Thai institutions who are accepted as professional musicians in *prachan* circles.

In my fieldwork, I received information about this *prachan* from my music teacher, *Khruu* Chaiya (a *piiphaat* specialist at the Department of Fine Arts) when I had a *prachan* music lesson with him. He mentioned that this event was one of the significant *prachans* that takes place once a year and is arranged by the Department of Fine Arts. He also recommended that I attend this event in order to extend my knowledge about the different forms of music competition. On the day of the *prachan*, I saw a number of musicians from the four military bands and the audience who participated in this event, and I began to remember them precisely. I realized that I knew most of these adept musicians from my fieldwork at the previous *prachan* events and other music schools. Apparently, these musicians, who work in the four military services and the other two institutions, mostly came from different music schools around Bangkok and other provinces. Given that there were many *prachan* musicians

[29] King Pinklao's full name is Phrabat Somdet Phra Powarentaramed Mahisared Rungsan Phra Pinklao Chaoyuhua (*พระบาทสมเด็จพระปวเรนทราเมศมหิศเรศรังสรรค์ พระปิ่นเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว*)

[30] King Monkut's full name is Phra Bat Somdet Phra Poramenthra Maha Mongkut Phra Chomklao Chaoyuhua (*พระบาทสมเด็จพระปรเมนทรมหามงกุฎ พระจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว*)

from different music schools who varied in age at this event, it seemed that I was not sure whether I was going to be conducting fieldwork at a *prachan* event or an annual formal meeting of Thai musicians. This event was like a meeting for pleasure.

My *prachan* music teacher, *Khruu* Chaiya, pointed out that this event was the only chance each year for the musicians from the six institutions to meet and perform music together. He is a *piiphaat* specialist at the Department of Fine Arts and a respected musician in Thai music circles, and I understood his explanation of this event when I saw many musicians from the four military bands and other institutions who came to this event showing respect to him. He looked very happy and smiled when he saw those musicians, particularly some of his old friends or pupils that he had not seen for a long time. 'Hnui', a pilot officer, and a leader of the Thai music band of the Royal Thai Air Force, also claimed that this *prachan* was not serious; it was like a reunion and a good opportunity to see all of the bands of the four military services and the other two institutions performing together. Beyond the environment, the setting of this *prachan* was also outstanding. It might be said that the setting of the six ensembles against each other, around the garden beside the Department of Fine Arts, looked marvellous and powerful. This setting was not the same as the other *prachan* events that I had attended. It looked formidable. The *prachan* musicians all wore their own official suits to compete with each other on stage. Implicitly, this *prachan* setting illustrated the power of the six music institutions to the audience and all of the musicians at this event.

One of the most interesting features of this event was the concept and process of the *prachan,* which was somewhat varied and different from the previous events I had attended. This event started with the *seephaa* chant, called *wai khruu seephaa*, in order to invite the holy spirits (Buddha, Instruction of Buddha and Monk) to come to the event as well as to pay respect to the gods of music and teachers' spirits. Then, the *prachan* began with the *Rua Pralong Seephaa* as an introductory piece, followed by the

pieces in the framework, which can be separated into five parts: the *hoomroong* (*Hoomroong Aiyareet*), the *tayoe*, the *Choet ciin* & *Khaek-Boratate* pieces, the *diaw* (*Khaek Mon* (แขกมอญ) piece) or solo, and the *phleeng laa* (*Phra- Athit Ching Duang* (พระอาทิตย์ชิงดวง)).

The striking feature of this event, arguably, was the concept of *prachan* in the form of '*toe thon*'(*ต่อท่อน*). *Toe Thon* is a *prachan* method in which all of the musical ensembles perform together in one piece, but in different sections or movements. Each ensemble normally chooses one movement from a piece of music and they are performed in sequence. In Thai classical music, this form of *prachan* is quite serious for the musicians, since the ensemble who performs the later movement (continuing from the previous ensemble) has to show or prove that they are better than the previous one. All musicians do this in competitions because it is a way to test their musical proficiency and intelligence in terms of how they perform and respond to the previous ensemble in a short period of time, continuing the same piece. It is very challenging for the musicians of each ensemble to show and outdo the other ensembles through their musical proficiency in term of techniques, sounds, speeds, and so forth in the competition. In the course of the *prachan* competition at this event, the Department of Fine Arts, as the host, imposed the form of *toe thon* in the three pieces: the *Hoomroong Aiyareet* (*hoomroong* or the overture repertoire), the *Choet Ciin,* and the *Phra-Aatit-Chingduang* (*phleeng laa* or farewell repertoire). This form of *prachan*, arguably, reveals the musical identity, competence and way of musical creativity of each ensemble.

The *Hoomroong Aiyareet* piece, for instance, showed the way in which the *toe thon* form works and how the musicians respond to each other in *prachan*.[31] The *prachan* in this piece started with the performance of the Royal Thai Police ensemble, who showed several musical techniques at high speed. In particular, a famous *ranaat*

[31] The Department of Fine Arts did not perform the *hoomroong*, since they considered that as the host they should not perform the first piece of the competition.

eek player, Sergeant Major Montree Klaaycham, outdid the other ensembles with his deftness and strength in the *rao* technique in the *Rua Phralong Seeephaa,*[32] as an introductory piece. At the end of this introductory piece, they also played small solo phrases on each instrument. Then, the Royal Thai Navy ensemble responded with their complex improvisation, after the singing section in the first movement of the *Hoomroong Aiyareet*, and the *khayii* technique for all of the main musical instruments from the beginning of the first round of this movement. Finally, they revealed the main melody through improvising in the second round in the regular tempo before finishing their performance. After a singer from the Music Division - Culture, Sports and Tourism Department/Bangkok had sung the second movement of this piece, the instrumental musicians of this ensemble performed a new arrangement of this movement alongside the *khayii* technique for the whole of the second movement of the first round. Then, in the third movement, strategically, the Royal Thai Army responded to them by showing a beautiful and smooth melody in this movement at a slow tempo. A *ranaat eek* player from the Royal Thai Army then demonstrated the *rao* technique to show his musical ability in terms of making delicate sounds and a clear melody on the *ranaat eek*. In the last movement, a *ranaat eek* player from the Royal Thai Air Force showed his musical proficiency in terms of improvisation by performing three notes in A, G, B repeatedly at high speed, as a *khayii* technique, several times during the accompaniment section for a singer. Then, the ensemble performed a new arrangement of this movement through their own improvisation at double speed with the *kwaat* (กวาด) *technique* on each musical instrument to show their musical strength and creativity. They also represented a western dialect in marching style at the end of this movement, in the *luuk thaw* (ลูกเท่า) phrase (the melody based on a single note), before playing the whole movement again in the fundamental melody. Finally, the Royal Thai Air Force

[32] Traditionally in *prachan* competitions, musicians usually play the *Rua Phralong Seephaa* piece before the *hoomroong* repertoire as an introductory piece.

ended this piece by playing the *wa* phrase to symbolize the end of the *hoomroong* repertoire (DVD track 16). The form of *toe thon* in this *prachan* also applied in the *Choet Ciin* and *Phra-Artit-Chingdoung* pieces (*laa* or farewell repertoire). Each ensemble tried to outdo the others by showing their musical technique - particularly, at the end of a singer's part as an accompaniment and in the instrumental part - as well as representing a new arrangement of each movement in the competition.

Regarding the *tayoe* repertoire at this event, this illustrated the different process of this *prachan* competition. At this *prachan* each ensemble took it in turns to perform a piece from the *tayoe* repertoire to compete with the others. The distinctive feature of this repertoire was the performance of the Royal Thai Police and the Music Division - Culture, Sports and Tourism Department/Bangkok ensembles in the *Khaek Oat* (แขกโอด) (*saam chan*) and *Tayoe Nauk* (ทยอยนอก) (*saam chan*) pieces respectively. As for the performance of the Royal Thai Police in the *Khaek Oat* piece, the musicians and audience were attracted by their deftness and the strength of their performance, particularly from a *ranaat eek* player, Sergeant Major Montrii Klaaycham, who at present is one of the best *ranaat eek* players. He represents his mastery on the *ranaat eek* by means of his sophisticated improvisation and fierce performance speed. On the other hand, the Music Division - Culture, Sports and Tourism Department/Bangkok also showed their virtuoso performance and creativity in the piece '*Tayoe Nauk'* through the solo section of each instrument in the first movement and the use of a western dialect and small entertaining songs in the course of the third movement (DVD track17 and 18). In particular, they used the Thai children's song '*haag wa rao kamlung sabaai*'[33] to encourage the audience and other musicians to clap along with their song. This strategy was successful in gaining a big round of applause from the audience.

[33] *Haag wa rao kamlung sabaai* is one of the popular repetitive children's songs in Thailand. The original melody and lyric is supposed to be in the public domain, but the most well-known lyric in English is 'If you're happy and you know it'. In Thailand, this song is normally used to entertain and attract public interest.

Another crucial point about this *prachan* was the *diaw* or solo repertoire. That year, the host obliged every ensemble to perform the *Khaek Mon* solo piece (*Diaw Khaek Mon*) by choosing a representative from each ensemble from the six official institutions to perform on the five main *piiphaat* instruments. Intriguingly, in the process of the *prachan,* in order to be impartial, the MC asked the audience to draw paper lots to find a representative from each ensemble. The representatives for each official institution were as follows: the Royal Thai Navy - *pii nai*; the Royal Thai Police - *ranaat eek;* the Music Division - Culture, Sports and Tourism Department/Bangkok - *khong wong yai*; the Royal Thai Air Force - *khong wong lek*; and the Royal Thai Army - *ranaat thum*. The performance on each instrument by those official institutions was very exciting and powerful. In particular, when each musician showed their musical proficiency through their musical techniques and strength on their instrument, it seemed that the audience was greatly excited and impressed by their performance.

For instance, the solo on the *ranaat eek* performed by Sergeant Major Montrii Klaaycham from the Royal Thai Police (DVD track 19) showed his virtuosity with complex techniques such as *sabut* (สะบัด),[34] *kaapluuk-kaapdauk* (คาบลูกคาบดอก)[35] and *tii-thaang* (ตีถ่าง),[36] as well as several types of *rao* (รัว) techniques. At the end of his performance, he also increased the tempo to show his strength and proficiency in controlling the full sound of the melody at a fast tempo. As he performed those complex and difficult techniques with clear and full sounds on his *ranaat eek*, he captured the hearts of all of the musicians and the audience at the event. On the other hand, in the solo on the *khong wong lek* performed by Pilot Officer Teerapong Tongperm from the

[34] *Sabut* is a musical technique for Thai musical instruments that involves making grace notes.
[35] *Kaapluuk-kaapdauk* is a musical technique and an improvisary style on the *ranaat eek* instrument that is mostly used in solo pieces. The *ranaat eek* player applies this in the performance by performing the *rao* (see *rao*) and *kept* (octave) musical techniques interchangeably.
[36] *Tii-thaang* (literally meaning expandable hit) is one of the musical techniques for melodic percussion instruments such as *ranaats* and *khong* (*gong)* circles. It is also viewed as one of the unique *ranaat eek* musical techniques, representing the way of playing the *ranaat eek* melody with both hands in the16th interval.

Royal Thai Air Force (DVD track 20), the *Khaek Mon* piece was played at the beginning in a slow tempo with a calm and elegant style. However, after that he showed his ability to overcome the others by speeding up the tempo instantly with the *khayii* technique throughout the whole piece, showing his strength and complex improvisation skills. This technique is a way of improvising melodies at double speed, for which the musician must have a great ability in terms of improvisation, memory and balancing timing. However, instead of showing this technique in some phrases of the solo piece as in the traditional way, he improved this technique by playing it throughout the whole piece that he performed. Moreover, in the course of this solo piece, he also used adaptable or advanced techniques such as the *khwaimuu* (*ไขว้มือ*)[37] and *kwaat khwaimuu* (*กวาดไขว้มือ*)[38] with a fierce style and high speed, showing his superior techniques and creativity in adapting these to fast solo pieces. As a result, his virtuosity completely drew the attention of the audience and the musicians from the other institutions.

It was intriguing that when I had asked those musicians from the official institutions about this *prachan* event before it began, most of them (including my *prachan* music teacher) said that this event was just an annual friendly meeting for musicians. Nevertheless, when the *prachan* started, I did not feel that it was a hospitality meeting; it felt like a music battle in which each institution attempted to beat the others by showing their musical techniques, new arrangements of pieces, solos, and so forth. In my mind, I was surprised by these *prachan* musicians from each institution. It seemed that this music competition was intended to be a friendly meeting, but in practice they still attempted to challenge and outwit each other through their performance. Whilst at the *prachan*, I interviewed one of the leaders from the four

[37] *Khwaimuu* is a Thai *khong* circle musical technique that involves crossing the hands or arms to beat a *khong* (gong) to make different sounds. It is particularly used in solo pieces.

[38] *Kwaat khwaimuu* is a *khong* circle musical technique that involves using the beater with the right hand to sweep the notes on the instrument (see *kwaat*) in the left or right direction at the same time so the left hand crosses the right hand or arm in the opposite direction to beat a *khong* making different sounds.

military bands regarding this event. He noted that he was satisfied with his performance that day, but he had not expected the other institutions to prepare their performances seriously with several musical techniques and a variety of performance. He stated that in the formal meeting among the institutions before this event, they claimed that this was just an annual friendly meeting and not serious. However, in practice, it was not like that; on the day of the *prachan* they came out with their fierce performances. He added that it was his luck that he did not trust them and he had prepared well for this *prachan*.

After watching this *prachan* and interviewing some of the audience members and musicians at this event, I felt that those people were quite impressed by the performance. This is because these performers are virtuoso musicians and it is quite rare to see *prachan* between four military services, the Fine Arts Department of Thailand and the Music Division - Culture, Sports and Tourism Department/Bangkok. As mentioned previously, we can see that the concept and process of the *prachan* 11th *Piiphaat Seephaa*-tii-Wang Naa were relatively different from other *prachan* events, due to the concept of a *prachan* form between six ensembles, the *toe thon* process, the *diaw* or solo piece and so forth. Additionally, they used complex musical techniques to outdo each other as well as showing their musical creativity in applying small entertaining pieces in the course of the main pieces at the *prachan* to gain the public's interest.

Figure 2.11: *Prachan* '11th *Piiphaat Seephaa*-tii-Wang Naa' 2013, Fine Arts Department of Thailand ensemble showing their musical proficiency before the eyes of other official institutions

From the four *prachan* events, as previously stated, we can see the characteristics and distinctive features in the concept and process of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* in different aspects. Apparently, this represents the fundamental concept of *prachan,* as it is predicated in the notion of musical interaction and response. The significant aspects of *prachan* from the four *prachan* events that I have set out above can be illustrated in the form, concept and process of each event as follows:

Prachan Wat Phra Phireen

- One-to-one competition setting
- Responding to each other through an old and sophisticated piece and a new composition
- Showing a high-speed performance with sound quality and complex techniques

(such as *sabut*, *rao*, and *khayii*)

- Playing solo phrases from the *Kraao Nai* and *Tayoe Diaw* pieces at the *chan dieo* metrical level and the *haang phleeng*
- Applying Thai pop folk songs as part of the *haang phleeng* and using Western musical instruments such as a drum kit and bass drum to accompany the *hua phleeng* and *haang phleeng*
- Applying the performing method '*yown klade'* with phrases from a *Kraoo Nai* solo piece in a musical piece
- Outwitting the other ensemble by showing more complex musical techniques and improvisation before the other player performs in the next piece.
- Using physical movements to show and challenge the other group
- Using drama and dance to support the *prachan* music and to challenge each other during the competition.

Prachan Wat- Sriprawat

- Three ensembles in the competition setting
- Revealed the concept of each ensemble increasing the speed consecutively in performance with musical techniques (speed or the performance each time has to be superior to the other) in the three-ensemble setting
- Responding to and expressing music intensively in the competition by means of performing phrases from a *Kraao Nai* solo piece and from several small pieces in the *haang phleeng* such as *Ram Dab, Jaosen, Choet, Oat, Kraao Ram,* and *Faichum*, implying outdoing and defeating their enemy.
- Using physical movements to challenge the other group

Prachan Ngaan Loy Krathong Ratchaburi festival

- One-to-one competition setting
- Trapping and outwitting the opponent by using delegates to play the main instruments such as the *ranaat eek* or exchanging musical instruments between players on stage while testing the microphone to hide the skills of the main players and to test the response, skills, speed, and style of their opponents
- Outwitting and challenging the opponent through high-speed performance such as setting the rhythmic pattern of the band in a fast tempo, and the *ranaat eek* player speeding up his performance and leading the tempo of the ensemble.
- Each main instrument in the ensemble playing solos of small phrases of melody in the *hua phleeng* and *haang phleeng* with foreign dialects such as *phma* (Burmese) and *farang* (Western marching style).
- Applying musical pieces such as *Sarama Thai* and *Choet Khaek*, and a solo on the *ranaat eek* in the *Choet* piece in the course of the *haang phleeng* implying fighting and defeating their opponent

Prachan 11th *Piiphaat Seephaa*-tii-Wang Naa

- Six ensembles in the competition setting
- *Toe thon* form in the *Hoomroong Aiyareet* (overture), *Choet Ciin,* and *Phra-Aatit-Chingduang* (farewell repertoire) reveals the way of competing and responding in turn between movements or sections in the same piece
- Representing musical competence and knowledge by means of new musical arrangements (in the *hoomroong* and *tayoe* repertoires), musical techniques (such as *khayii, sabut, rao, kwaat*, *kaapluuk-kaapdauk* and *kwaai muu*), sound volume and quality, and high- speed performance.

- Showing a small entertaining song in Western marching style with clapping in the course of the main piece.
- Representing a method of performing in the *diaw* (solo) repertoire by obliging every ensemble at the *prachan* to perform a *Khaek Mon* solo piece by choosing a representative from each ensemble from the six official institutions, to perform on the five main *piiphaat* instruments. In the *diaw* repertoire/piece musicians show the best of their virtuosity by means of musical techniques, speed and the sound of the music.

In short, from the four *prachan* competitions in my fieldwork, we can see the differentiation between the *prachan* events in terms of the concept, process and musical strategy. By and large, it seems that generally *prachan* focuses on how each ensemble responds to the other(s) through the *hua phleeng*, *haang phleeng* and *diaw* (solo) pieces with the involvement of musical strategy, musical techniques (such as *khayii, sabut, rao, kwaat* and *kwaai muu*), sound quality and dynamics, and a high speed, as well as physical movement. From my fieldwork, participating in several *prachan piiphaat seephaa* competitions, and interviews with key musicians and music scholars, I found that the form and process of *prachan* varied from the idea in the standard form. For example, *prachan* are traditionally expected to be direct one-to-one competitions with the groups sitting beside each other on the stage. In my fieldwork, however, the competition setting was varied, with the number of competitors or ensembles on stage at each event differing between two, three or six ensembles. These settings are still called *prachan* in the musicians' and audience's perception. Furthermore, the structure of the *prachan* format at each event in my fieldwork was varied, and was not compatible with the standard format of *prachan* repertoire in musicians' ideology. More importantly, the process and rules of the *prachan* in my fieldwork also varied depending upon the circumstance and context of each *prachan* event. The changes and trends in *prachan*

piiphaat seephaa will be explained in Chapter 5. Arguably, the different processes and rules relate to different ways of performing *prachan* and the concept of musical response. In other words, at *prachan*, musicians usually change and improve their ideas in regard to musical response - through musical strategies, musical techniques and musical pieces - to challenge and defeat their opponent(s) in accordance with the process and condition of *prachan*. Therefore, the involvement of performers or dancers in *prachan* as a way of stealing a march on their opponents, with melodies and improvisations in the competition, is a good example to demonstrate that *prachan* is a process of competing in terms of musical ideas and concepts. Apparently, it is the process of expressing and exchanging musical ideas between musicians in music competitions.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed my research methodology and fieldwork at four main *prachan piiphaat seephaa* events. This leads us to understand the way in which *prachan piiphaat seephaa* is constructed and has progressed and how it is perceived as a significant music competition in Thai music. We can see the overview and the variety of forms, processes, and characteristics of *prachan* at different events. As previously stated, *prachan* is generally predicated in the musical response through the musical pieces with the variety of *hua phleeng*, *haang phleeng* and *diaw* (solo) pieces, musical strategies, musical techniques, sound quality and dynamics, and high speed. With this approach in mind, the significant aspect of *prachan* is the process of musical response in terms of the musical concept. This can be seen as general knowledge of *prachan* at present. The term '*prachan'* is widely known among Thai music circles as an intense music competition implying a way of raising awareness of musicians' status and conflict. To comprehend this concept and its implication, the term 'conceptual fighting'

should be taken into account as an idea to describe the process of *prachan piiphaat seephaa*. In the next chapter, I will describe *prachan piiphaat seephaa* at a deeper level through the aspects of conceptual fighting and conflict in relation to the notion of musical interaction and response in Thai music.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Fighting and Conflict

When musicians in Thai music circles talk about *prachan*, they know that it refers to an intense music competition between ensembles through which musicians' musical wisdom and proficiency can be expressed and their opponent publicly defeated. Arguably, it implies a type of musical conflict between musicians and musical ensembles. Indeed, for musicians '*prachan*' is not only a music competition, but also a musical combat. Music competitions that are regarded as a musical combat also exist in other cultures in different contexts and conditions. I will now describe some of these in order to compare them with *prachan*.

The *Maracatu rural* music and dance parade competition, part of the Pernambuco carnival in Brazil (Pinto 1996: 97-119), illustrates musical combat between different social groups. This competition is an expression of social freedom through which the social identity of ethnic groups can be represented in public. The competition embodies group identity through the variety of sounds produced by musical instruments (such as snare drums, friction drums, double bells, rattles, pea-whistles and trombones) along with singing (ibid:102). As this carnival competition is highly competitive in terms of representing the social identity and power among ethnic groups, it is transformed into a conflict, or 'from play to war' (ibid:115). In contrast, the Gamelan Beleganjur contest (*Lomba Beleganjur*) for Balinese music is viewed as a musical combat that symbolises the contests and combinations of power between local and national values (Bakan 1999:98). It is a competition involving the modern form of the processional Balinese gamelan, *gamelan beleganjur bebonangan*. This event reflects the Indonesian national ideology under the Balinese provincial government, which has the authority to rule the competition, focusing on the concept of social solidarity to preserve the national culture (Bakan 1999:100). The Gamelan Beleganjur contest is viewed as a musical battle that is

traditionally associated with the conflicts between musicians and music schools - in different groups, villages and regions - which are regarded as 'hidden battles' in performance (Bakan 1999:219-220). Historically, the Guozhi recital in 1943 in Quanzhou,[39] China (Lim 2014:300) was a musical battle between two renowned musical groups, Huifengge and Shengpingzou. It was a public performance that was held in the Baosheng Dadi temple at Huaqiaoting, Quanzhou, to celebrate the deity's birthday. Apparently, both groups set up their formal stage in the same place and challenged each other to trigger competitiveness (ibid.). It was an intense competition, as music was played constantly, and singers took turn singing successively each day from the afternoon until midnight.[40] The two groups performed alternately for six days, without repeating songs previously sung by other singers. On the seventh day, Huifengge won the competition, since Shengpingzou ran out of musical pieces to play (ibid.).

Prachan piiphaat seephaa, as mentioned in the last chapter, is viewed as a musical combat or conflict between ensembles that occurs through the process of musical response in competitive performance. It is regarded as a significant medium through which the musical identity, embodiment and social structure of Thai music is represented. Hence, to clarify this idea, the term 'conceptual fighting' will be used to describe *prachan* in relation to musical interaction and response. This term fundamentally suits the notion of *prachan* music, which is relevant to the underlying concepts of tradition and context in Thai music. The key questions to address in this context are: 'How does the role of conceptual fighting and conflict work in *prachan* music?' and, 'Why is it significant in Thai musical society and culture?' A consideration of these questions will contribute to comprehending *prachan* in relation to Thai music circles and culture. In this chapter, I shall describe the characteristics of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* as expressions of conceptual fighting and musical battles.

[39] Quanzhou is a city in southern Fujian province, China.
[40] This type of competition was a common event in the 1940s (Lim 2014:300).

The term ‘symbolic cultural meaning’ will be applied to support this concept as a shared idea in Thai musicians’ perception alongside the aspect of audience response and conflict. Following on from that I will discuss the framework of musical interaction and response, which will broaden the concept of *prachan* by means of four interactive approaches and a discussion about the power of music.

Conceptual Fighting and Musical Battles

From the onset of this research, the term ‘conceptual fighting’ came to mind when I realised that *prachan* relates to the concept of musical interaction and response in accordance with the format of musical performance in Thai music circles. I use the term ‘conceptual fighting’ to mean the war of ideas within the musical competition, and the term ‘musical conflict or battle’ to mean the competitive swapping of musical ideas (melodic, rhythmic, sounds, etc.). However, I found that it was very difficult to perceive the concept and process of conceptual fighting in *prachan* through textbooks, CDs, audio files, or even interviews. This is because the conceptual fighting model is apparently a two-way process that reflects a call and response ideology. More importantly, this concept involves not only the performance of musical ensembles on stage, but also the audience and the wider context of a *prachan* competition event as a whole. The most straightforward and best way to understand the concept and the relationship between *prachan* and conceptual fighting is to learn and absorb these through direct experience of the actual circumstances and environment of *prachan*. In Chapter 2, I chose four *prachan piiphaat seephaa* events from my fieldwork as examples of this concept: *prachan* Wat Phra Phireen, *prachan* Wat Sriprawat, *prachan* Ngaan Loy-Krathong Ratchaburi and *prachan* 11th *Piiphaat Seephaa*-tii-Wang Naa. These events are quite distinctive and characteristic, representing the conceptual fighting and conflict idea in music competitions.

From these four *prachan* competitions, I found that *prachan* involves musical response in various forms. The general process involves the musicians performing alternately in the pieces of different levels from each repertoire in sequence. Most importantly, the significant feature of *prachan* is the process of expressing musical ideas in the competition between the musical ensembles. It is also a musical combat that creates an intense musical performance through the rivalry between the musical ensembles, which grows during the competition. Therefore, *prachan piiphaat seephaa* is considered to be a musical response, characterised as 'conceptual fighting' and conflict, representing the way in which the musicians try to challenge and defeat each other in competition by means of musical ideas - by applying musical pieces, musical strategies, musical techniques (such as *khayii, sabut, rao, kwaat, kwaai muu*), sound quality and dynamics, a high speed, and also physical movements (see Chapter 2). However, some musicians argue that *prachan piiphaat seephaa* should be considered as a formal competition that shows musicians' technical competence rather than their creative ideas. They apparently claim this from the point of view that musicians usually outdo each other through obvious musical ability by means of musical techniques, such as a fast tempo in the competition. Contrary to this point of view, I argue that *prachan* is essentially considered to be a musical response in terms of musical ideas and concepts, rather than technical skills, which relate to the process and rules of the competition. From the examples of the four *prachan* events and my experience as a *prachan* musician, the involvement of musical creativity through new musical arrangements and compositions in *prachan* as well as strategies of response - such as outwitting one's opponents on stage, and choosing and preparing the *hua phleeng, haang phleeng,* and *diaw* pieces (with musical techniques and a high speed performance) to outdo each other - are crucially important in defining the characteristics and process of *prachan* as conceptual fighting. Musical competence is regarded as part of the

strategy that is used to respond to the other ensemble in order to become the 'winner' in a competition. Therefore, *prachan piiphaat seephaa* is, on the whole, regarded as a form of musical response through musical ideas and concepts, rather than merely technical skills.

As mentioned above, the term 'conceptual fighting' refers to the musical response and combat between the ensembles at a *prachan* event. However, this term has a significant meaning that is more than a musical response or competition between the ensembles or musicians on stage. The conceptual fighting model is not only viewed as musical combat between musicians or musical ensembles on stage in *prachan*, but also implies a conceptual response or conflict between music schools, music masters, families and so forth, in relation to those in the competition. It can be argued that conceptual fighting exemplifies *prachan* as a representation of musicians' relationships. By and large, in my fieldwork, *prachan* between musical ensembles at events such as the *prachan* at Wat Phra Phireen and Wat Sriprawat (Phraphireen and Sriprawat temples) illustrated not only the competition, but also how knowledgeable and well-informed their music teachers/masters were in representing their musical ideas in terms of orchestration, musical strategy and techniques. Arguably, the *Prachan* Ngaan Loy Krathong festival that I experienced during my fieldwork represented an intense competition between two famous music schools from different areas – the Sit-Reungnond and the Thai-Banlaeng, from Bangkok and Samute-Songkram province. However, this *prachan* also added great dignity to the competition between music masters *Khruu* Boonsang Reungnond and *Khruu* Saman Gaewlaeiat, since it linked to the fame of their musical families (Reungnond and Gaewlaeiat families) and their ancestors.

In fact, there are several examples of *prachan* and conflict in Thai music history involving this concept. The famous historical *prachan* event in 1975 at Wat Phra Phireen in Bangkok between two renowned ensembles, the Pluuam-priichaa and

Hualamphong ensembles, is one of many examples that exemplify this concept[41] (see also Chapter 1). This *prachan* is viewed as legendary in Thai music circles, as it was a great competition not only between two great *prachan* ensembles, but also between two famous *ranaat eek* players, Somnuk Sornpraphan and Kamon Pluuam-priichaa. They performed alternately in four musical pieces from four main repertoires comprising *Hoomroong Mahachai* (*โหมโรงมหาชัย*) and *Hoomroong Ciinloo* (*โหมโรงจีนโล้*) (overture), *Tayoe Khameen* (*ทยอยเขมร*), *Diaw Khaek Mon* (*เดี่ยวแขกมอญ*) (a solo piece for each main *piiphaat* instrument), and *Phra-Athit Ching Duang* (*พระอาทิตย์ชิงดวง*) (farewell). It was a nail-biting competition in which those ensembles demonstrated their musical proficiency and creativity through musical techniques, arrangements, orchestration and strategies. However, in the end, the Pluuam-priichaa ensemble was formally judged as the winner,[42] as their performance was the most effective in term of upholding the forms and values of the competition.[43] Apparently, beyond representing the great performance and competition between the musicians from those ensembles, this *prachan* was also considered to be a platform for proving, and responding to, the musical intellect of their music masters *Khruu* Somphop Khampraseot and *Khruu* Prasit Thawon. Intriguingly, this *prachan* seems to have been complex and intense, as it has been revealed that there was a wager on the dignity of the two ensembles, and also that of the two masters who were both from the same famous music school, *Luang* Pradit Phairau. This also links back to their great music master *Luang* Pradit Phairau (Sorn Silapabanleng), one of the great Thai music masters of the twentieth century. Implicitly, this *prachan* became more and more earnest as it involved the fame of the institutions,

[41] Wiboontam Peeanpong, interview, 19/3/2013

[42] It was uncommon at a *prachan* event to have a formal judgement by a jury and the declaration of a winner.

[43] Even though the Pluuam-priichaa ensemble was declared the winner, there was a controversy among the musicians and the audience about the result of the competition. This is because the majority of the jury in this *prachan* and the musicians of the Pluuam-priichaa ensemble were from the same institution, the Fine Arts Department of Thailand. This raised a controversy about the fairness of the jury's judgement, leading to conflict between those ensembles. This gave rise to the avoidance of a judgement and the declaration of a winner in later *prachans* at this temple.

since most of the musicians from the Pluuam-priichaa ensemble were also from the Fine Arts Department of Thailand, one of the great official music institutions in the country. Following this line of thought, in my fieldwork I was also surprised when *prachan* musicians at the Wat Phra Phireen revealed to me that during the competition they responded to each other with music in order to demonstrate and uphold the fame and value of their ensembles, teachers/masters, musical families, and even institutions rather than their own individual status.

Extending this idea, another aspect that must be borne in mind is the fact that in *prachan,* musicians emphasise the importance of the group or social organization of Thai musicians. In Thai terminology, the term '*phuak*' (พวก) (literally, group or party), is used to identify different circles in Thai society. Fundamentally, in Thai music, a music master/teacher and his disciples are bound together as a group by means of the concept of *thaang* or musical style. In their research, Myers-Moro (1993: 106) and Deborah Wong (2001: 80) also claim that the fundamental concept of the social organization of Thai musicians relates to the concept of *thaang* (ทาง), in that *thaang* represents how musicians perceive themselves in groups and that the formation of the group is an indispensable process bound up in the musical performance. *Thaang* in Thai terms literally means way, path, road or journey. However, in music, the term *thaang*[44] generally means musical style, referring to the variation or interpretation of a composition that identifies the characteristic of a particular instrument, and the versions of standard pieces closely associated with individual teachers and music schools (Myers-Moro 1993:107). Groups of Thai musicians are recognized through the formation of *thaang*, which in turn is associated with the identity and the lineages of their music teachers or schools. This is how *prachan* musicians conceive of themselves

[44] *Thaang* has various musical meanings. It can have three main meanings: musical mode, individual improvisational style, and the performing character of a particular musical instrument (Wong 2001:79-80, Montri (2530/1987). Given that the meaning of *thaang* is wide, this makes the way of performance, musicians, and instruments also varied and different from each other.

as groups and both protect and promote the identity of their own music teachers, music schools and institutions in public. The concept of an aggregation of musicians is crucial and integral to the notion of conceptual fighting in *prachan*. This is because it illustrates how musicians represent themselves as groups through their own musical identity and creativity. Most importantly, it signals that musicians' relationships are intrinsic to the process of musical response and conflict in *prachan*.

It seems to be generally accepted among Thai musicians that the conceptual fighting reflects not only the musicians' proficiency, but also how intellectual their music teachers/masters are and how influential their music school, institution or musical family is perceived to be. In this sense, in *prachan*, the conceptual fighting underlines the relationships between musicians and others in their own musical line or group relations (such as Thai music masters, music families, music schools, institutions and so forth), representing the power of social aggregation and division in *prachan* circles. Therefore, the conceptual fighting has a great impact on the *prachan* performance, making it intense and competitive by turning the performance itself into a musical conflict. It seems that, in *prachan*, the idea of conceptual fighting is applied not only for the sake of the musicians themselves, but also for the sake of their relationships, as a range of musical and extra musical networks in Thai music circles.

In addition, conceptual fighting in *prachan* has become embedded in the musicians' way of life. This is because *prachan* is classified as high level musical performance in Thai music circles, particularly *prachan piiphaat seephaa,* which is accepted as the most intense and virtuosic *prachan* in terms of performance. Musicians generally consider *prachan* as requiring a high standard of performance and regard it as a transitional stage, through which ordinary musicians become professional. Arguably, being a *prachan* musician is important in increasing the status of musicians and the fame of their music schools in Thai musical society. This ideology has been functioning

in Thai music and has worked efficiently, particularly in the past when *prachan* was highly competitive and was held in high esteem in Thai society more than it is today. It is possible that the establishment of conceptual fighting in *prachan* arose out of a desire to protect the status of musicians in their relationships in Thai music circles. This concept also relates to the traditional model of the teaching/learning system in Thai music schools. The traditional system or 'father and children' system will be explained in more detail in Chapter 4. This system establishes a close relationship between teacher and students as father and children, resulting in the strong feeling that the musicians are protecting the fame of their music school and music master like their own family. The strong feeling of being a music group, as a family, and taking pride in musical knowledge and performance underpins the intensity of the musical response in *prachan*. Protecting the status and fame of musicians and music schools affects the practice of *prachan* and the function of conceptual fighting in Thai music circles. The concept of *prachan* and musical response is embedded in musicians' perception and has become general knowledge amongst *prachan* musicians.

As previously stated, conceptual fighting is embedded in musicians' understanding of *prachan*. However, in practice, this concept can be applied not only in terms of *prachan* competitions, but also in Thai musical society as a whole. Dr. Dusadee Swangviboonpong, a Thai music scholar and music specialist in Thai classical singing and *khruang saai* (เครื่องสาย) (Thai string instruments) has argued that 'the concept of musical response or conceptual fighting occurs not only in the context of formal *prachan*, but also in the general performance of musicians' life'.[45] He highlights an example from his experience of playing the *jakhe* (จะเข้) (fretted floor zither) in the *khruang saai* ensemble at a Thai funeral. Interestingly, when his ensemble heard a Thai music performance at a nearby event, where complex techniques were being performed

[45] Dusadee Swangviboonpong, interview, 2013

at high speed, his ensemble was spontaneously urged to play their music faster and faster, and to show off ever more complex techniques in response to the sounds and melodies that they heard from the other ensemble. He argued that he did not know himself why he responded with an increasingly fast and complex performance, but he could not bear to play normally and had to follow his instinct to respond to the music that he heard. Likewise, *Khruu* Phachern Kongchoke (known as *Khruu* 'Chaen'), a *piiphaat* specialist at the Fine Arts Department and one of the famous musicians from the Duriyapraniit music school, argued that 'the concept of musical response also happens by the very nature of the musician'.[46] He provided an example of his experience with his friends of musical response in a *piiphaat* performance at a temple. The situation occurred when his musician friend, who was playing music for a funeral in the temple, called him to come to the event instantly to help his ensemble to play music to respond to the other ensemble, which was playing music for another funeral in a pavilion nearby. He argued that the musical response and combat happened unexpectedly and spontaneously, since his friend thought that the other ensemble were intentionally performing music to challenge his ensemble, even though they were playing music for another funeral. Interestingly, *Khruu* Chaen added that this circumstance happens at several music events, as though Thai musicians are programmed to contest all the time through their music. So, these are good examples that show how conceptual fighting works in general music performance and also how musical response develops and instinctively becomes an informal *prachan*.

As mentioned previously, *prachan,* with the notion of conceptual fighting, is also viewed as the movement or the process of dispersion of musical knowledge in Thai music circles. By and large, *prachan piiphaat seephaa,* with the notion of conceptual fighting, is viewed as the fundamental model of high-skilled performance for

[46] Phachern Kongchoke, interview, 20 Oct 2012

professional musicians. This is a significant reason why most musicians or audiences like to attend these events, since they can broaden and develop their musical knowledge and skills from seeing and listening to the performance of other famous *prachan* ensembles. Generally speaking, musicians who have attended or participated in *prachans* imitate or apply this conceptual fighting concept - alongside musical strategies, techniques, styles and compositions that occurred in the competition - to their own performance in general. Arguably, there are a number of new styles of musical performance, musical techniques, compositions and orchestration in the *probkai* or *tayoe* pieces (both in *saam chan* and *thao* form), *haang phleeng* pieces and solo pieces that have occurred in *prachan* and become famous pieces, musical techniques, or styles that musicians apply in their general performance nowadays. It can be argued that the concepts of conceptual fighting and musical knowledge that have been created and function in the realm of *prachan* have spread and been re-applied in Thai music performance as a whole. So, it might be said that the notion of conceptual fighting through musical response and conflict is embedded in musicians' way of life. This is one of the significant aspects illustrating how music has been created and developed in Thai music circles. The idea of conceptual fighting and conflict is transmitted from *prachan* to other musical performances, which illustrates the process of dispersing musical knowledge and musical creativity from the micro to the macro level in Thai music circles. Conceptual fighting and conflict is embedded in general Thai music performance. It can be perceived as the fundamental knowledge in the broad sense of musicians' perception in Thai music culture. In this section, I have discussed how the role of conceptual fighting and conflict in *prachan* represents the way in which musicians respond to each other through musical concepts with the involvement of a range of extra-musical networks. This concept has been developed through the *prachan* process among musicians as a musical model and dispersed to general musical

performances in Thai music circles as a whole. In the next section I shall explain the ideas of conceptual fighting and musical response in relation to communication in music. The term 'symbolic cultural meaning' will be applied to clarify the process of *prachan* in Thai musical culture.

Symbolic Cultural Meaning and Musical Response

I have described how *prachan* is a type of conceptual fighting, representing the way in which musicians respond to each other through music in competitive performance. In these competitions, each musical ensemble tries to respond to and dominate the other by showing their musical proficiency, wisdom and strength through the pieces of music they play. *Prachan,* in musicians' perception is very meaningful, since it is the process of musical response, providing an opportunity for them to create and present their own musical works and ideas to communicate with each other. Arguably, musical communication is a significant factor in explaining the meaning of *prachan*. As a matter of fact, we cannot deny that the process of musical response or conceptual fighting is related to the way in which musicians communicate with each other and also with the audience in competitions. In this respect, music is used as a medium by each ensemble to communicate with and challenge the other at *prachan*. In terms of communication, fundamentally we understand this term as important for human beings in regard to sharing or exchanging information in society. However, the fact is that we mostly understand this term in relation to human language, but what about music? In this context we need to ask the questions, how we can communicate through music and how we can perceive or interpret the meaning of music that others transfer to us. These questions are challenging in terms of revealing how *prachan* music works in Thai music circles. From my fieldwork at *prachan* competitions, it seems that the way that *prachan* musicians fundamentally respond to each other in music is through its symbolic

meaning. In *prachan*, musicians use music or pieces of music as musical messages to challenge and defeat each other. In other words, they communicate with each other through the symbolic meaning of music, using this 'musical symbolism' to communicate and express their own critical thinking and feelings to defeat their rivals.

Symbolic meaning is an important part of the musical response and communication in *prachan* music. However, the way of musical response in *prachan* is not simply a method of general communication. Rather, it is the process of testing the musicians' and music teachers' musical intelligence, and whether or not they have in-depth knowledge of Thai music within the framework of Thai culture. In other words, the musical response in *prachan* is the process of communicating, creating and developing the meaning of the musical pieces, techniques and melodies embedded in Thai musical culture. It is an idea of musical communication based on the influence of cultural construction. With this approach in mind, we could consider the idea of musical response in *prachan* as a way of communication that is related to 'symbolic cultural meaning'. From my fieldwork, it is evident that symbolic cultural meaning was seemingly communicated in *prachans* mostly in the *hua phleeng* (the introductory piece), *haang phleeng* (the small piece performed after the main piece) and *diaw* (the solo pieces) with musical techniques and a high speed (see Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion). The musicians usually apply these in the course of *prachan* pieces in each repertoire to respond to each other.

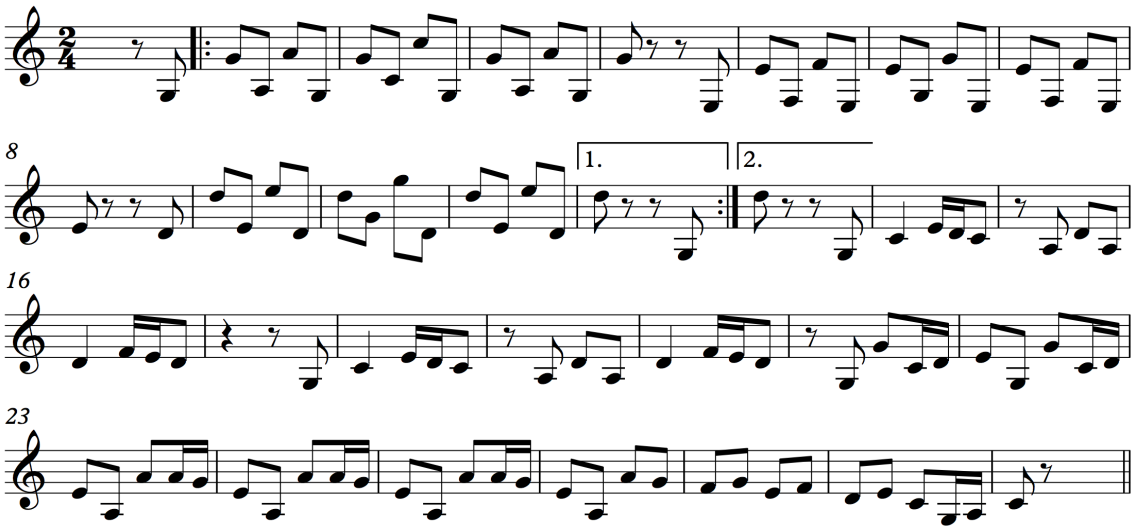
As an example from my fieldwork, during the competition between the Sit-Reungnond and the Saue Banlengsin ensembles at Wat Phra Phireen, apart from the main piece *Tayoe Khameen* (from the *tayoe* repertoire), the former tried to respond to the latter by using their new composition in the *haang phleeng* piece together with a Thai pop folk song called '*Yom Phraban Chaoka*' (ยมบาลเจ้าขา). They applied this song by using a *pii nai* (quadruple-reed oboe) to play some phrases of the main melody of the

song lyric, with the ensemble accompaniment, alternately with the melody of a new composition in the *haang phleeng*. I was amazed at first that they played a part of this song in the *haang phleeng* piece, since the meaning of the song's lyrics is 'asking for a prince of devils to bring this person to hell', thus symbolising the insulting and challenging meaning to their competitors. Certainly, when their rivals and the audience heard this song, they knew instinctively that the Sit-Reungnond was challenging and trying to outdo the other side. In contrast, the Saue Banlengsin tried to respond to the Sit-Reungnond by performing the piece *Choet Ciin*. In particular, in the fourth movement of this piece, they played a small solo section on each musical instrument at a high speed to show their musical proficiency, which received a big round of applause from the audience and the musicians.

Likewise, a *prachan* at the Loy Krathong Ratchaburi festival involved a competition between the Sit-Reuangnond and the Thai-Banlaeng, led by *Khruu* Boonsang Reungnond and *Khruu* Saman Gaewlaeiat respectively. After the Thai Banlaeng ensemble had performed the *Don Jaedii* (*thao*) piece alongside the *hua phleeng* and *haang phleeng* pieces, which has both *phma* (พม่า) (Burmese) and *farang* (ฝรั่ง) (Western marching) dialects and signifies fighting, the Sit-Reuangnond ensemble responded, demonstrating their musical proficiency by playing at a higher speed and improvising a small solo phrase on each musical instrument virtuoso in the *Tayoe Nai* piece. Then, they started challenging their rivals by showing their musical creativity in their new small compostition in the *haang phleeng* piece, followed by playing the piece *Sarama Thai*, intimidating them through the sounds of the *pii chawa* (a small quadruple-reed shawm), the *klong khaek* (a pair of double-headed drums), and the *ching* (a pair of small cymbals). These musical instruments are normally used to accompany the *wai khruu* dance ritual and fighting in Thai martial arts such as *muay thai* (มวยไทย) (Thai boxing) and *krabii krabaung* (กระบี่กระบอง) (stick and staff fighting).

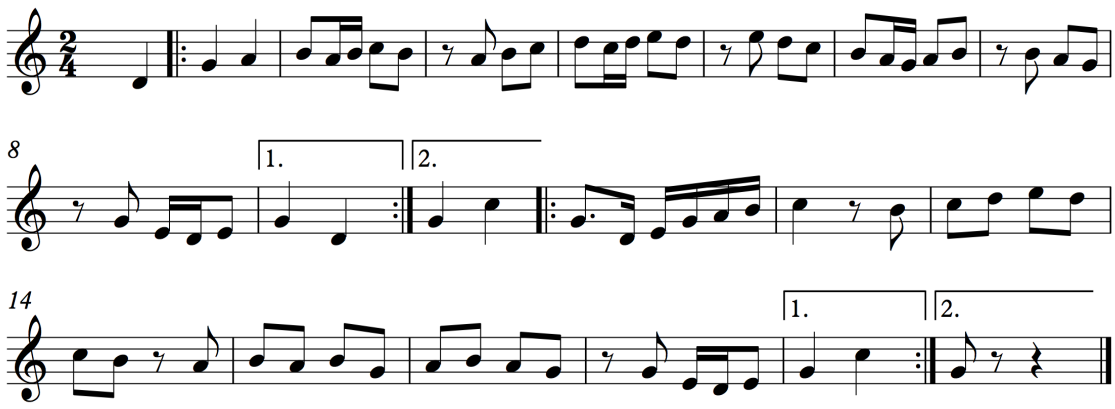
The sounds of these instruments in this piece also imply showing respect to the teacher's spirit before the real fighting begins in the full form of Thai martial arts (Public relations department 1968:9-10). Then, they played the *Choet Khaek* (เชิดแขก) piece as an introduction to the fight before outdoing their rivals by playing a solo on the *ranaat eek* in the *Choet* (เชิด) - a piece from the *naa phaat*[47] repertoire, representing the action of marching troops and fighting, accompanying theatre and plays such as masked dance drama (*khoon* (โขน) - with the accompaniment of their band, signifying the meaning of fighting with (both boxing and sword fighting) or killing their rivals before ending their performance with the *luukhmot* (ลูกหมด) (the ending section of a musical piece).

Figure 3.1: An example of the *haang phleeng* in the *phma* (Burmese) dialect, played by the Thai Banlaeng ensemble



[47] *Naa phaat* is a type of musical repertoire comprising a large number of pieces used in various rituals (such as *wai khruu*) and also to accompany traditional performances such as masked dance drama(*khoon*), shadow theatre (*nangyai*) and popular theatre (*likee)*. *Naa phaat* pieces (*phleeng naa phaat*) are used to illustrate the actions of such characters in performance.

Figure 3.2: The *Choet Khaek* piece in the *khaek* (Indian) dialect in the *haang phleeng*, played by the Sit-Reuangnond ensemble



The most significant *prachan* in my fieldwork, in terms of illustrating the idea of conceptual fighting in the form of the *haang phleeng* piece, was the *prachan* at Wat Sriprawat. This was the competition between Ang Thong College of Dramatic Arts and Kunchaun Duriya. When the Ang Thong ensemble performed phrases from the *Kraao Nai* and *Tayoe Diaw* solo pieces in the course of the main piece *Bungbai* (บังใบ) (*thao*), the Kunchaun Duriya became annoyed at the seeming provocation embodied in their virtuoso performance. Hence, they responded by applying various musical techniques, in yuan dialect and small pieces in the *haang phleeng* piece, after the main piece, *Tayoe Yuan* (*thao*) in their own performance. These small pieces or phrases of pieces have a powerful meaning in Thai music culture. They started with the *Ram Dab* (รำดาบ) (literally meaning sword dance) - a piece from the *naa phaat* repertoire that is usually used in the *wai khruu* ritual to accompany the action of slashing a food offering for deities. This piece symbolises willingness to slash the enemy, and it was followed by the *Jaosen* (เจ้าเซ็น), a piece accompanying Thai boxing, which signifies punching or boxing. Then, the *Choet* (เชิด) piece was applied to signify fighting and repelling the opponent. In each movement of this piece, they also turned around to see the faces of their opponents and used physical movements of their bodies and hands to annoy them,

as if to say, ‘Can you handle it?’ Then, after that they performed the *Oat* (โอด) (literally meaning lamentation) – a piece from the *naa phaat* repertoire describing sadness or crying, to signify their rivals crying. This was followed by the *Kraao Ram* (กราวรำ) - a piece from the *naa phaat* repertoire symbolising a celebration or happiness, which accompanies Thai plays and *wai khruu* rituals - implying their celebration as winners of the competition. The Kunchaun Duriya, eventually, applied a phrase from the *Fai Chum* (ไฟฟุ้ม) (literally meaning fire gathering) - a piece that is used to accompany Thai funerals - to the *luukhmot* ending section, symbolising burning their enemy to end their performance. This *prachan* greatly excited the audience, who were mostly *piiphaat* musicians from different musical schools and institutions. They reacted instantly when they heard the small pieces played by the Kunchaun Duriya, as they genuinely knew the meaning of those pieces. For instance, they shouted loudly ‘Hey, hey…go go!’ in the *Choet* piece, as it represents the meaning of fighting, ‘*Chaiyo Chaiyo*’ (a celebration sound) in the *Kraao Ram* piece, as it symbolises the celebration as a winner, and ‘Burn them, burn them…’ in the *Fai Chum* piece, as it delivers the meaning of burning at a Thai funeral. Apparently, the audience was satisfied with the way in which the musicians challenged and responded to each other in this competition.

Figure 3.3: The *Ram Dab* piece in the *haang phleeng*, performed by the Kunchaun Duriya ensemble

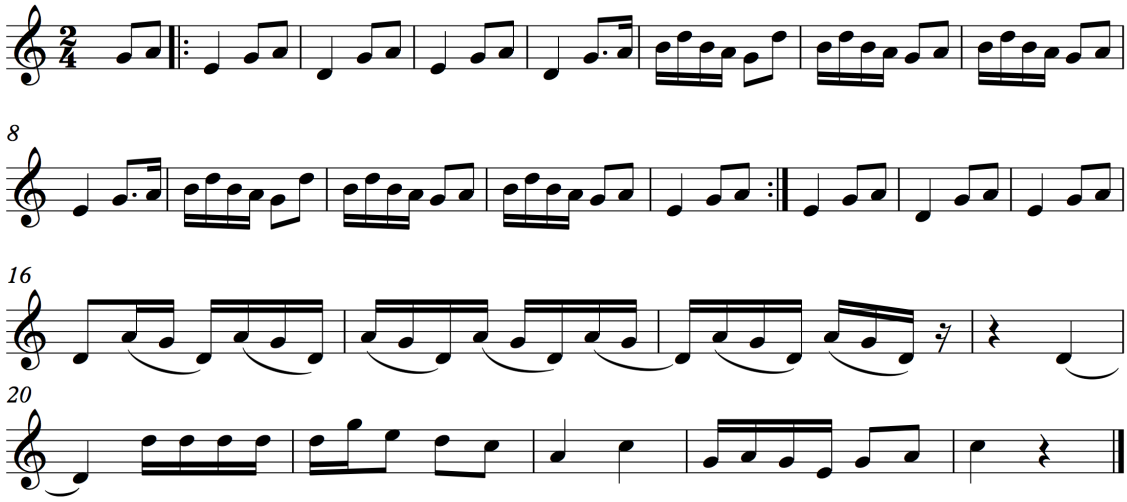
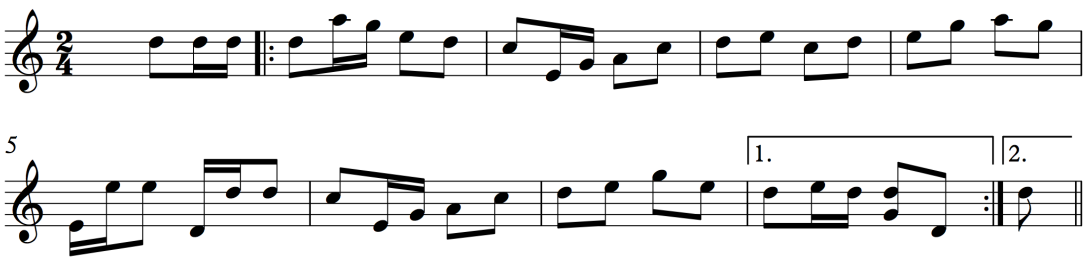


Figure 3.4: An example of the *Kraao Ram* piece in the *haang phleeng*, performed by the Kunchaun Duriya ensemble



As for solos in *prachan,* it might be said that the solo pieces or phrases played on a musical instrument are one of the great examples of *prachan* that symbolises the meaning and belief in Thai musical culture. In Thai music culture, an instrumentalist's solo symbolises showing superior musical competence and challenging others. So, in *prachan,* musicians mostly use solo pieces to respond to and overcome each other. In competitions, musical ensembles mostly create their own solo sections in the course of the *prachan* to give the musicians' a chance to play solos and to respond to each other. With regard to the solo, how to adapt or incorporate a solo section on each musical instrument into the main piece or the *hua pheeng* and *haang phleeng* pieces, as well as how to show and outdo their enemy in competitions, is very stimulating to musicians' creativity. In practice, there are several ways to create a solo phrase for each instrument and apply it to the *prachan* pieces, depending on the musical wisdom of the music teacher or musicians. Each music ensemble can develop the meaning of a solo into their *prachan* piece to communicate with the other ensemble in different ways. The solo section, in *prachan,* can be created in a new arrangement by each ensemble. The music masters or musicians also represent new musical arrangements with solo phrases alongside improvisation on each instrument to show their musical intelligence and competence.

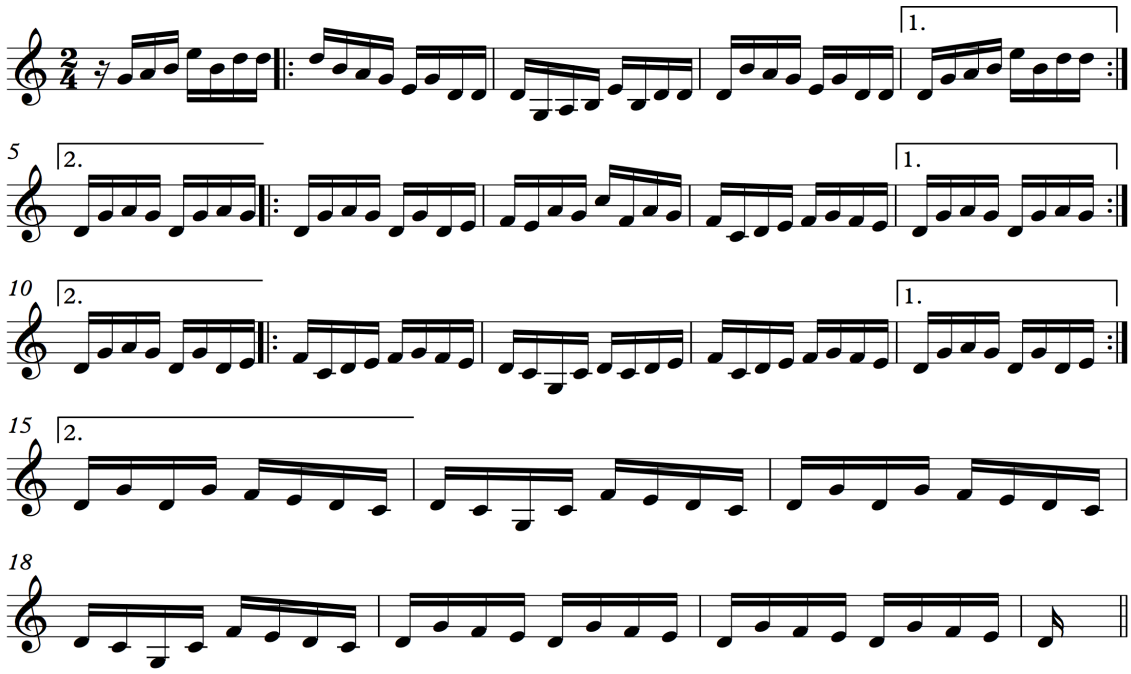
From the examples of *prachan* I encountered during my fieldwork, as previously described, it is evident that beyond the new composition of solo phrases in a new

arrangement of *prachan* pieces, the musicians frequently chose a solo piece from the main solo repertoire to adapt for the solo section of their *prachan* pieces. Each ensemble usually applied the solo piece *Kraao Nai* in the main piece or the *haang phleeng* piece in the course of the *prachan*. Moreover, some ensembles in the competition applied and adapted some phrases of the *Kraao Nai* (กราวใน) and *Tayoe Diaw* (ทยอยเดี่ยว) solo pieces to play as solos together continually in the same section of the *haang phleeng* piece. This is because both solo pieces from the solo repertoire have a significant meaning as representing the superior power and status in musicians' perception and Thai music culture. In traditional Thai music, solo pieces generally identify the level of musicians, since each piece has its own level of difficulty in terms of complex musical techniques, styles, strength and melodies, so only musicians who have great musical skill and wisdom can perform them efficiently.[48] Even though there are several solo pieces in Thai music that can compete with each other, the *Kraao Nai* and *Tayoe Diaw* are the only two major solo pieces from the solo repertoire that are highly esteemed in *prachan* at present. Phrases or sections of these pieces tend to be used in competitions in the course of the main piece and the *hua phleeng* and *haang phleeng* pieces. By and large, in Thai music culture, the *Kraao Nai* and *Tayoe Diaw* are considered to be the highest level solo pieces. A musician who learns these pieces is also granted high status as a musician in Thai music circles. It demonstrates that the musician is accepted as a professional by his music teacher and has great musical ability, to learn to play all of those pieces with him. It can be said that these two pieces are powerful in Thai musicians' perception. Traditionally, very few professional musicians learned the *Tayoe Diaw* solo from their music master or teacher, since it is considered to be a secret piece of Thai music, and each music school tries to keep knowledge of it to itself. (This concept, however, has changed, with the development of media in modern

[48] Pinit Chaisuwan (Thai National Artist 2540/1997) and Chaiya Thangmisi (music specialist at the Fine Arts Department of Thailand), interview 2013.

Thai society, which will be explained in Chapter 5.). It is very rarely performed in public. This piece is accorded great respect by Thai musicians, denoting that the person has had an opportunity to learn this piece as a professional musician or has a high level of musical knowledge.

Figure 3.5: An example of the *Kraao Nai* solo piece in the *haang phleeng* by the *ranaat eek* from the Sornmechai Ruengroung ensemble (*prachan* Wat Phra Phireen 2012)



The *Kraao Nai* and *Tayoe Diaw* are thus regarded as the two solo pieces that have the highest level and status in Thai music. Hence, this is the reason why in *prachan* musicians from each ensemble usually apply a phrase from the *Kraao Nai* and *Tayoe Diaw* in their own *prachan* performance. This is because they know full well that those two pieces have a powerful meaning as 'musical symbolism' in Thai music culture. With this approach in mind, we should consider why most musicians become annoyed and angry when some ensembles perform a solo piece in their *prachan* pieces. This is because the solo or solo piece in Thai music culture is a way of showing musical ability and also superior power compared to the other. It demonstrates musicians' musical creativity and embodiment by means of the richness and sophistication of their musical

composition, improvisation and techniques. It is considered to be a 'musical weapon' in *prachan* competitions. In particular, if someone performs the *Kraao Nai* and *Tayoe Diaw* solo pieces, most musicians feel that they are being challenged by their rivals through the most powerful and superior pieces, which they believe are pieces with the highest status and dignity in Thai music culture. Surprisingly, they feel very sensitive about those pieces, even though some ensembles perform just some phrases from them in the *haang phleeng* piece during competitions. Hence, they have to respond to their rivals with superior pieces or in different ways and with different techniques that contribute to the process and atmosphere of *prachan* so that it becomes more serious and intense as a musical conflict. Evidently, this also gives rise to a conflict in terms of both musical and human battles between the musical ensembles or music schools in Thai music circles. This is because, as previously stated, it is also related to the dignity of the musicians involved with regard to a range of musical and extra-musical networks in Thai music circles. Therefore, it accelerates the antagonistic atmosphere, and turns the *prachan* competition into a human conflict in reality.

In short, the process of *prachan* involves the musicians performing *prachan* music alternately and consecutively in the pieces of different levels from each repertoire in sequence. Traditionally, in *prachan*, when an ensemble performs a piece or solo, then the other has to find a way to respond to or communicate with them through the musical piece or techniques that have a superior meaning or different styles of performance. Conceptual fighting is a way of using music to defeat or establish superiority over other groups. This is done by responding to, outwitting, and communicating messages as well as by introducing novelty or creativity. In *prachan*, musicians apply music as a musical weapon, to challenge and fight each other by showing their musical proficiency and creativity through their performance, conveying the implicit meaning of their conceptual thinking to overcome the other. Among other ways, as a means of

conceptual fighting, they respond to each other by means of the *hua phleeng* (หัวเพลง), *haang phleeng* (หางเพลง) and *diaw* (เดี่ยว) (solo) pieces with musical techniques, sounds, and a high speed, alongside creating a story or meaning that is loaded with symbolic meaning, which is shared by the musicians and audience in Thai music culture. Symbolic meaning is also carried over in the pieces from the *naa phaat* repertoire used in association with other performance contexts, particularly theatre and rituals. The way in which they respond to and challenge each other consecutively with musical meaning establishes the growing rivalry between the musical ensembles and the musicians as musical conflict. We can see the relationships between the role of conceptual fighting and symbolic cultural meaning in *prachan*. These ideas work together in music competitions as musical conflict in the context of Thai musical society and culture.

Audience Response and Conflict

We cannot deny that one of the significant factors influencing the concept of *prachan* and conceptual fighting is the audience. This is because a fundamental characteristic of *prachan* identity is that traditionally there is no judgement by a jury and no declaration of a winner. Hence, the audience is viewed as the main agent of an 'indirect judgement' in musicians' perception; the audience identify who is the winner or which ensemble is better. Regarding the *prachan* performance, the truth is that in *prachan*, musicians perform music not only for the purpose of responding to and overcoming each other on stage, but also to communicate with and make an impression on the audience. So this means that in fact the audience has an enormous impact on the musicians' thoughts in their performance. Generally, an audience at a *prachan* competition, for instance in a Thai temple, will comprise different people of varied ages and sexes, such as musicians, music masters, music composers, students, fan clubs, the general public and monks. Interestingly, the audience will have different levels of understanding in regard to

prachan music and also differing views of the *prachan* concept and performance. In *prachan* culture, the audience responds to and expresses their satisfaction with their favourite ensemble by means of cheering in support, clapping, shouting, giving a reward by hanging Thai garlands and Thai notes on either musical instruments or musicians' necks during their performance, and at some special events buying a small flag from the temple and pinning it on a cut section of banana trunk laid in front of the ensemble for voting. Arguably, the involvement of the audience in *prachan* has been the cause of the change in, and development of, *prachan* performance. Musicians try to improve their musical strategy and ideas in performance to gain the attention and response of the audience by means of their orchestration, style, complex musical techniques, the sound of their musical instruments, and solos, and even by applying some phrases from popular pieces such as pop and rock music, which is held in high esteem in Thai society, in the *hua phleeng* and *haang phleeng* pieces. The performance of the Kamlai ensemble, with the performing method known as '*yown klade'* (ย้อนเกล็ด) in the phrases from the *Kraao Nai* piece, and also the Thai pop folk song '*Yom Phraban Chaoka*' in the *haang phleeng* of the Sit-Reungnond ensemble were viewed as both a way of musical response in regard to the role of conceptual fighting and a way of musical creativity in attracting the audience's attention and response.

In musicians' perception, the audience's response in *prachan* is considered to be an important part of the competition, which influences the way they respond to each other and the quality of their performance. *Prachan* musicians mostly agree that cheering sounds and voices from the audience have an impact on the way they perform in competitions, making their performance more confident, vivid and powerful. It has a psychological effect, giving encouragement to performers and establishing the competition atmosphere as more intense and entertaining. The striking point of the audience's reaction in *prachan* is that it supports the element of musical conflict. The

response from the audience members to an ensemble fundamentally arouses adversary thoughts in the other ensemble in the competition. At some *prachan*, for example in a one-to-one competition setting on stage, the audience are themselves separated unintentionally into two sides in front of the stage to support their own favourite ensemble. Therefore, the musicians from both ensembles are provoked by the cheering sounds and voices of audience members from each side to develop their musical ideas and defeat each other with their music. Significantly, the audience contributes to and creates the intense process and atmosphere in the competition, which sometimes leads beyond the musical conflict in *prachan* to an actual conflict between the musicians and music schools. At some *prachan* events in the past, the challenges and insults from the audience aroused the musicians and actual fighting took place during or after the competition. Apparently, sometimes, musicians or audience members would be hurt by a gun or a knife, since one side could not bear the insults and losing their dignity in the competition. Following this aspect, it can be said that the audience is one of the significant parts of the *prachan* process and its development. Additionally, regarding the audience's response in *prachan*, it is interesting that when audience members cheer for their favourite musicians or ensembles, a sound environment is created for the *prachan*. This sound environment is evidently established from the multiple voices and sounds of different degrees from the audience and others influencing the *prachan* process and context as a whole. Significantly, this proves that, in reality, *prachan* is not only a process of musical interaction and response between musicians or musical ensembles on stage, it is also an interaction between the musicians and others in the context of the competition. In the next section, four interactive approaches will reveal the *prachan* framework in depth.

Musical Interaction and Response and the Power of Music

In the previous sections, I have discussed the concept and process of *prachan* in Thai music circles. I have discussed the significant aspects of *prachan* in terms of the relationships between the role of conceptual fighting and symbolic cultural meaning in Thai music culture. These ideas show that *prachan* is a form of musical response and strategy between musical ensembles. Through this, we realise that *prachan* involves a process of relationships between musical performers and others during the event. In practice, it is not possible to understand *prachan* merely through the concept of a musical interaction between ensembles, without the involvement of others (audiences, music teachers, and so forth). In order to perceive the process and identity of *prachan*, the cooperative network and interaction with others at a *prachan* event should be taken into consideration. As mentioned above, the ideas of conceptual fighting and symbolic cultural meaning based on musical response and communication occur in the specific space and time of the interaction and response with others at a *prachan* event. It can be said that the process and meaning of *prachan* lie within the framework of the interactive approach in relation to the development of communication and social activity in *prachan*. Hence, in order to perceive the identity and process of *prachan*, the whole process of the interaction should be revealed. Therefore, I would like to represent the process of an interactive approach in relation to the conceptual fighting in *prachan*. To clarify my idea of *prachan* interaction and response and the power of music, Benjamin Brinner's idea of an 'interactive network' (Brinner 1995) and Christopher Small's idea of 'Musicking' (Small 1998) will be partly taken into account in my interpretation.

Musical Interaction and Response

In *prachan*, from the *prachan* framework, the concept of interaction and response represents a cooperative network within the *prachan* performance and its context,

forming a fundamental framework through which we can describe *prachan* identity and the process as a whole. This concept can be separated into four interactive approaches illustrating the interactions of *prachan* music within ensembles, between ensembles, with the audience, and with the wider surroundings at a *prachan* event. In this research, I would like to use specific terms to represent the framework of those interactions in *prachan,* which are as follows: interactive collaboration, interactive conceptualisation, interactive audience, and interactive environments.

Interactive collaboration, in my research, refers to the way in which *prachan* musicians cooperate with each other within their ensemble in competitions. This concept resonates with Benjamin Brinner's theory of an 'interactive network' (1995). He explains clearly how Javanese Gamelan players cooperate with each other in an ensemble to represent their musical creativity and performance. From his perspective, the musicians in the ensemble interact with each other during their performance. He represents the role and relationships between musicians as the role of a leader and followers as a whole in their performance. These roles are sometimes interchangeable during the performance as they support each other through communication as well as with cues and control in the ensemble. As for *prachan piiphaat seephaa*, musicians also create an interactive collaboration during their performance by means of their improvisation and cues. However, the interaction and response in this context refers to the cooperation through the sounds, melody and speed signals. An example from my fieldwork is the *prachan* between the Sit-Reuangnond and the Thai Banlaeng at the Loy Krathong Ratchaburi festival 2012. During the competition, the *klong khaek* or drummer players of the Sit-Reuangnond performed on their drums more loudly whilst speeding up the tempo to challenge their rivals, so a *ranaat eek* player would follow that speed to show his superior improvisation and speed to the opponents as well. In practice, this is the concept whereby each musical instrument listens and reacts to the

others in order to support the melodies, sounds, rhythm and speed of the ensemble. In competitions, the musicians usually follow the cues from the *ranaat eek* (treble xylophone) as a leader and the *klong khaek* drums. However, sometimes followers such as the *ranaat thum* and *khong* (gong circles) also implicitly give the melody or signal to lead the *ranaat eek* and the *klong khaek* as well. Those instruments also listen to and play carefully with the other instruments. In practice, the *thaang* or improvisation style of each instrument always interacts and supports the others in the ensemble in each piece in order to respond to their rivals. This interaction is significant as the musicians have to establish the relationships between all of the instruments in the musical ensemble efficiently. If they are successful in their interactive collaboration within the ensemble, they will be quite efficient in responding to their rivals with good sound quality, a technique showing their cooperation, and complexity in their performance.

Interactive conceptualisation is the idea of the interaction between ensembles. It is the process of call and response, the way of 'conceptual fighting' in *prachan*. It is the way in which musical ensembles try to respond and communicate with each other in order to challenge and defeat their rivals in competitions. They respond to each other through the musical pieces, *hua phleeng*, *haang phleenge,* and *diaw* (solo) with sounds, melodies, musical techniques, physical movements and lyrics from their pieces of music, symbolising and transferring the meaning to the other. This interaction plays a key role in *prachan* and Thai music as a way of developing musical ideas between musicians and ensembles; it is the conceptual fighting. The *prachan* between the College of Dramatic Arts of Ang Thong and the Kunchaun Duriya at Wat Sriprawat and the *prachan* between the Sit-Reuangnond and the Thai Banlaeng at the Loy Krathong Ratchaburi festival, as previously stated in this chapter, are good examples that illustrate how the musicians respond to each other with music through their musical ideas with the involvement of musical meaning as symbolic cultural meaning that is embedded in

Thai music culture. It is the cooperative ideas functioning together in *prachan* competitions as musical conflict in the context of Thai music circles and culture. Interactive conceptualisation is viewed as the main interaction of the *prachan* framework creating an intensity in performance and establishing the cooperative network with others in the *prachan* context.

An interactive audience is one of the most significant features of *prachan*. This interaction is the interaction between the performers and the audience, which affects the performances of the ensembles and the role of conceptual fighting in *prachan*. The audience interacts with the musicians when they hear their performance and vice versa – the musicians also respond to the audience when they hear cheers or support from them. The audience dramatically affects the way in which the musicians think about, and consider how to show and express, their melody to respond both to them and their opponents. For example, from my fieldwork, 'Non', one of the drummers from the Sit-Reungnond, said that at the *prachan* event, during the performance of his ensemble on stage, when he heard the sound of clapping and shouting from the audience, he felt that the audience was impressed with his performance, so he tried to show his improvisation and techniques on his drum to the audience and his rivals even more. Likewise, in the *prachan* between the Kunchaun Duriya and Sit-Thonghlore at Wat Phra Phireen, as I mentioned in Chapter 2, the cheering voices and sounds of the audience members supporting their favoured ensembles, from both sides, had an impact on the way in which both ensembles performed and responded to each other. From my personal experience, I experienced *prachan* for the first time at Wat-Paa-Lopbury (or Lopbury temple). This is one of most famous *prachan* events in Lopbury province. At that time, I was a *pii nai* (quadruple-reed oboe) player in the ensemble of Chaiyuth Tosa-nga, one of the most famous *ranaat eek* players in Thai society. On the stage, when I performed, I felt excited because of the large audience and the difficulty of the pieces I was playing.

However, during the performance of my ensemble, after my solo piece, an old man who had listened to the music for a while stood up and gave me a 'thumbs up', saying 'very good, very good'. At that time, I was very proud of myself and willing to show more *pii nai* techniques and powerful sounds on my instrument. Therefore, we can see that the musicians interact with the audience, while the audience responds to the musicians by cheering in support, clapping and shouting. In turn, the musicians present more superior improvisation and musical strategies alongside musical techniques in order to impress the audience and outdo their rivals. It is through this interaction that a relationship is established between the musicians and the audience, which motivates the performance between the ensembles. The audience's encouragement and response motivates the way in which the musicians respond to each other in the competition.

The environment is a significant aspect of the interaction and musical response in *prachan*. The interactive environment involves the wider surroundings of the event, such as the *prachan* setting, the sound engineer, microphones, the MCs, the vendors, the event staff, the weather, and the sounds surrounding the *prachan* area. This concept responds closely to Christopher Small's notion of 'Musicking' (1998). He focuses on the social meaning or the activities of a large range of people around a musical event as the meaning of music or musicking. These things affect the *prachan* performance and the perception of the musicians and audience in the music competition. For instance, the setting of the *prachan* ensemble in pairs planned by the host increases the tension and stress between the musicians of each ensemble, since they feel that it is a direct comparison between two ensembles on stage in which all of their performances will be really obvious to the interested public. As Surapong Rohitachon, a musician from the Department of Fine Arts of Thailand and a host of the *prachan* event at Wat Sriprawat in my fieldwork, claimed, 'The reason why I did not want to arrange the *prachan* to perform in pairs on stage at this temple was because that setting of *prachan* looks quite

serious'.[49] He argued that it looked as if he, as the host, intended to support them in creating a conflict with each other through their performance. Then, he added that the setting of *prachan* in pairs made musicians very serious in their performance, while the setting of three ensembles on stage would make the atmosphere less formal. As mentioned above, it can be said that the musicians feel more relaxed if they have a *prachan* setting of three ensembles or more on stage. Furthermore, the sound engineer, the sound system, the microphones, and the staff who position the microphones for each musical instrument in the *prachan* can affect the way in which the musicians respond to each other and also the response from the audience to the performers. Evidently, *prachan* nowadays involve music technology and sound technicians, which control and support the sounds of the musicians' performance, influencing the way in which an opponent and the audience perceive their music at a *prachan* event. Therefore, these have a significant effect on the representation of the sounds of the musical instruments and the balance of an ensemble, as well as their musical strategy; music technology is used as a way to empower the musicians in their performance. By and large, one may consider this interaction an indirect interaction for *prachan*, but, in practice, it has an enormous effect on the *prachan* performance and the whole idea of music competitions.

From the four interactive approaches, we can see how the concept of musical interaction and response functions in the *prachan* framework. As mentioned previously, from these four interactions, we can see that *prachan* not only means the notion of musical response or conceptual fighting between musical ensembles on stage, but in practice it is also the concept of a cooperative network and interaction between *prachan* and others in the context of a performance event. This gives rise to a way of understanding *prachan* in terms of musical response and its relationships, which

[49] Surapong Rohitachon, a musician from the Fine Arts Department of Thailand, interview, September 2013.

develop the process and concept of *prachan* competitions to be more intense and meaningful to musicians and Thai music circles.

No Such Thing as Music?

Regarding the power of musical interaction and response that I have mentioned, it could be said that the way of interaction and response has considerable power to establish relationships and communication within ensembles, between ensembles, with audiences, and with wider environments in *prachan.* From this aspect, we can see the process and the way in which *prachan* cooperates and establishes the meaning and implication of social activity. This concept responds to the idea of Christopher Small, who created the fascinating concept of 'Musicking'. Musicking implies the relationships between people and their duties in a musical event as musical activity so the reader can understand the meaning of music and musical work as social activity rather than music itself. He represents his idea through the words 'no such thing as music' (1998:3). From this kind of thinking, Small focuses very much on the relationships between people and their activity at a performance event and tries to deny the power of music itself. In this aspect, I would argue that Small greatly oversimplifies and underestimates the significant role and power of music. I would like to clarify that even though the relationships between people and their activity have a powerful meaning at a performance event, this does not mean that music itself does not have its own power. Through my experience in *prachan,* music is significant and powerful in both the musicians' and the audience's perception. I argue that *prachan* music has considerable power, affecting the way in which the musicians respond and interact with each other. Beyond the interaction between musical ensembles, audiences, and the wider surroundings at *prachan* events, the crucial point is that through the role of conceptual fighting and the sounds of *prachan* music, the musical response or musical

conflict in competitions becomes reality in terms of the musicians' perceptions and feelings. In competitions, they create and interpret the meaning of music and respond to it seriously to overcome the other, as though it were not only a fight in terms of musical ideas and concepts, but a part of their lives. When I interviewed the musicians in the temples regarding their thoughts and feelings during the musical response in competitions, they seemed to feel angry and hurt, as though they had been attacked by their opponents physically. For instance, a *prachan* musician Cham said, 'In the competition I felt as if I had been punched with fists when our rival responded to us with a superior piece'.[50] Likewise, Non, another musician, claimed, 'I felt hurt like I had been stabbed by a knife when that ensemble played some high level solo pieces or some piece that has a challenging or insulting meaning to us, I could not bear it, hence I had to find a way to respond to them'.[51] In musicians' perception, *prachan* is more than just performing music to respond to other ensembles. It is the stage of conflict or fighting in terms of music and real life that is established through the meaning of sound, melody, lyric, and rhythmic pattern of musical performance. In reality, the musical combat or conflict in *prachan* does not end with the *prachan* performance itself, but fundamentally leads to conflict between the musicians and music schools in Thai music circles. Interestingly, the role of conceptual fighting as musical conflict in *prachan* has a great effect on the whole of Thai musical society. In this regard, it is very interesting that in *prachan*, the role of conceptual fighting, the sound of *prachan* music, and musical pieces loaded with symbolic cultural meaning provoke musicians' feelings and imagination in reality. This prompted me to realise the power of music and its role in stimulating human sentiment and creativity.

[50] Champ, interview, Wat Sriprawat (Sriprawat temple), Bangkok, 20/10/2012.
[51] Non, interview, Loy-Krathong festival, Ratchaburi, 28/11/2012

Conclusion

We began this chapter with an explanation of the role of conceptual fighting and musical combat that relates to the way of musical response through the musical concepts involved with musicians' relationships in *prachan.* The idea of symbolic cultural meaning gives rise to *prachan* in terms of communication, revealing how symbolic meaning works alongside the role of conceptual fighting in competitions as musical conflict in Thai music culture. Symbolic meaning also draws from an association with other performance contexts, particularly theatre and rituals, which combine with musicians' musical competence to intimidate or overawe the other in competitions. The audience is one of the main factors that accentuates the process of conceptual fighting and conflict in *prachan*. Lastly, the framework of musical interaction and response was revealed in the four interactive approaches - interactive collaboration, interactive conceptualisation, interactive audience and interactive environments - to clarify the whole concept of *prachan* in relation to the development of communication in music and social activity. Finally, I discussed the power of *prachan* music in regard to stimulating human sentiment and conflict. As mentioned above, we can see the relationships between the concepts of conceptual fighting and conflict, and symbolic cultural meaning, as well as the framework of musical interaction and response and the power of music in relation to *prachan*. In the next chapter I will look at the *prachan* rehearsals and lessons to explore how the process of learning *prachan* music and its relevance represents and works in Thai music circles.

Chapter 4: *Prachan* Rehearsals, Music Lessons and Mythology

In my fieldwork, in addition to observing *prachan* competitions, I carried out research by collecting information about *prachan*, especially *prachan piipaat seephaa*, through participant observation in the musicians' rehearsal process and in music lessons. This is because I realised that even though *prachan* can reveal significant phenomena and implications of Thai music competitions through conceptual fighting, the way that we perceive them in actual competitions is only for a moment. In practice, rehearsals and music lessons are also crucial for in-depth knowledge, shedding light on the process and concept as well as the relevance of *prachan*. I am very interested in the way in which musicians prepare themselves for competitions, relating to the concept of applying musical techniques and choosing the pieces of music, the similarities and dissimilarities in the response strategies and style of each music school, and how the process of learning *prachan* music and its relevance works in Thai music circles. Furthermore, in my fieldwork, I also found that mythology is a significant part of the process of teaching/learning music in both *prachan* rehearsals and music lessons. It is crucial to understand the significance and impact of how mythology shapes the way in which musicians think about *prachan* and Thai music. This significant information could lead us to take different perspectives and complement our understanding of *prachan* and Thai music circles. The process of rehearsals, music lessons and the involvement of mythology allow us to perceive musicians' thoughts about *prachan* and Thai music culture. With this approach in mind, I took part in the *prachan* rehearsals of two music ensembles, the Sit-Reungnond and the Kamlai, as well as taking *prachan* music lessons with *Khruu* Chaiya Thangmisi, a music specialist at the Fine Arts Department of Thailand, in Bangkok. In my fieldwork, the process of rehearsing *prachan*, learning *seephaa* music and perceiving mythology were significant in clarifying the relationships between *prachan*, conceptual fighting, and the musicians' way of life in Thai musical culture.

Rehearsals for *Prachan*

I participated in the *prachan* rehearsals of two musical ensembles, the Sit-Reungnond and the Kamlai, led respectively by the two famous music teachers Boonsang Reungnond and Chaiyuth Tosa-nga. Both ensembles nowadays are well known in Thai music circles as excellent *prachan* ensembles and music schools. I observed and interviewed music teachers and their musicians as well as participating socially and musically by playing with them during their rehearsal period. In this section, I would like to illustrate the process of *prachan* rehearsals as well as the relationships between the two ensembles to reveal *prachan* knowledge and its implication in musicians' perception.

The Sit-Reungnond Ensemble

I first participated in the *prachan* rehearsal of the Sit-Reungnond ensemble when I heard from musicians at Wat Phra Phireen and the Fine Arts Department of Bangkok that there was going to be a *prachan* for the *wai khruu* ceremony at Wat Sriprawat in October 2012. This event was popular among Thai music circles, since the host of this event, *Khruu* Surapong Rohitajon, is a well-known musician from the Department of Fine Arts. Furthermore, he invited several musical ensembles from different places to participate in this event. Musicians like to participate in this event to show their musical proficiency and to broaden their views about performing and listening to *prachan* music in different styles. In order to perceive the *prachan* concept and strategy as well as the musicians' way of life, I decided to participate in the rehearsal of the Sit-Reungnond ensemble and sought permission from *Khruu* Boonsang Reungnond to do so. *Khruu* Boonsang (known as *Khruu* Poo) is the music teacher and owner of the Sit-Reungnond music school. He is renowned among Thai music circles as a virtuoso *prachan* musician from the Duriyapraniit music school, and one of the adept musicians working at the

Fine Arts Department of Bangkok. Because *Khruu* Boonsang is a friend of my Thai music teacher, he kindly gave me permission to interview him and to participate in the rehearsal at his music school. It seemed at first that *Khruu* Boonsang and his pupils were somewhat surprised when I told them that I was a SOAS PhD student who was undertaking research into '*prachan*'. They seemed to be interested in me, since they had never heard of anyone conducting research into this topic, particularly a PhD student. This might be another reason why they welcomed my visit. I felt that as a PhD student from the UK, I had a passport and authority to undertake my fieldwork in their music school. I gained permission to cross the boundary into the realm of their culture and privacy. Hence, I was kindly invited to *Khruu* Boonsang's music school or 'music home' to interview him and his students during the rehearsal and *prachan* as well as to take pictures in regard to his life, certificates, prizes, and so forth. I have to thank *Khruu* Boonsang for his warm welcome and hospitality and for providing me with a lot of information and suggestions about *prachan* music.

On my first visit to the rehearsal of this ensemble at *Khruu* Boonsang's house, called 'Khana Sit-Reungnond', I was surprised when I heard the students of *Khruu* Boonsang call him '*phau*'(พ่อ) meaning father. Likewise, when *Khruu* Boonsang spoke to his students, he called them '*luuk*' (ลูก), which means 'child', alongside their names. It seemed that this music school has its own educational and relationship system in the form of father and son. The students in this music school are from different provinces; parents leave their children here to learn music. *Khruu* Boonsang brings up his students as his own sons by teaching them music, and providing them with accommodation and food, as well as money when it is needed. In other words, they eat, sleep and learn music in this music school as their home. His students, in return, also help *Khruu* Boonsang by cleaning his house and playing music. His students told me that they respected *Khruu* Boonsang as their father, since he generously brings up his students as

his own sons. Therefore, they dedicate themselves to him by helping him with everything and never refusing his requests to perform music. Interestingly, the relationships between the music students in this music school are also significant. *Khruu* Boonsang always tells his students to help and respect each other as brothers. Therefore, they are very compatible and respect each other as brothers and friends. Given that *Khruu* Boonsang is very well-known among *piiphaat* players as an adept musician and a great music teacher, he has many *Luuk Sit* (ลูกศิษย์) (students), particularly *ranaat eek* players, belonging to his house or music school. For this reason, the students, as brothers in his music school, can be separated into three groups: senior, middle, and junior, categorized by age. When *Khruu* Boonsang is busy with his work, the older group has a duty to teach the younger groups when they have difficulty in playing or understanding *prachan* music. Likewise, the junior group has to respect and obey the older, middle or senior groups, as they are older brothers sharing knowledge from *Khruu* Boonsang, as their father, with them.

In the process of rehearsing for *prachan* competitions, *Khruu* Boonsang usually asked his students to practise together as an ensemble. Even though sometimes he taught and demonstrated how to improvise in a specific melody with musical techniques on only one specific musical instrument, such as the *ranaat eek*, he still wanted everyone to come together in the ensemble to listen to his techniques and style. This is because he likes everyone in the ensemble to understand the characteristics of the techniques and develop an overview of each instrument in the performance.

Figure 4.1: A rehearsal of the Sit-Reungnond ensemble for a *prachan* event. *Khruu* Boonsang Reungnond (in a white tank top on the left) is orchestrating his ensemble and giving some guidance to his students

The atmosphere during the rehearsals was quite relaxed and friendly. Musicians usually took off their shirts during the rehearsals, since they got very warm when they used their strength to perform the very fast and complex techniques on their instruments in the *prachan* pieces. The way of learning *prachan* music is oral and by memory. *Khruu* Boonsang, for example, usually played or hummed some phrases or techniques of the *ranaat eek* melody, and then a *ranaat eek* player had to imitate him by playing the same melodies and techniques on the *ranaat eek* as he had done. This is the traditional way of learning *prachan* and Thai music. For a *prachan* musician, arguably, the most important things are memory and sagacity. It seemed that this was a normal way of learning *prachan*. Sometimes when F, a *ranaat eek* player, was not able to remember the melodies and techniques, the teacher would rebuke him and ask him to play those melodies and techniques repeatedly until he could remember them. He taught his students as his children. However, his students were never angry with him. Interestingly they thought that this was a way to concentrate and remember the

melodies and techniques precisely. As mentioned previously, the musicians played together as brothers and friends, teasing each other, but still respecting each other in the hierarchical system. For instance, I usually saw 'Pom', a hereditary son of *Khruu* Boonsang and his friends, as seniors of this music school, playing music with other members and also helping *Khruu* Boonsang to give instruction on how to play each instrument in *prachan* performance. Moreover, his friends in the senior group also suggested to two drummers how to play complex improvisations and how to adjust the drum pattern to accompany a singer on the *klong khaek* (a pair of double-headed drums) as they had experienced in several *prachan* with this ensemble. Usually, during the rehearsals, the senior or an older group would give some suggestions to a younger group, sharing their views on improvisation and musical techniques to support the younger group to perform their best in each *prachan* piece.

As for the plan and strategy in *prachan*, I asked *Khruu* Boonsang about his strategy in preparing for the competition. He said that he had already planned a strategy to respond to other ensembles. He argued that even though the *prachan* at Wat Sriprawat was a *prachan* between three ensembles on stage and so less intense than one with two ensembles, this event was still serious in his view. *Khruu* Boonsang referred to a method of choosing a musician for each instrument in relation to the pieces of music. He pointed out that each musician had his own musical strengths and weaknesses. In *prachan*, the way in which he chose a musician was related to the strength or character of that musician in relation to the character of each instrument and the piece of music. For example, at that time, he chose M, a *ranaat eek* player, to perform the *Siibot and Tayoe Kameen* piece, since M was a good *ranaat eek* player with a good memory and the strength to play at high speed in a short melody. He was compatible with this piece, which is distinctive in terms of the complementary and contradictory style in a short sequence of melodies. During our conversation, *Khruu* Boonsang was also pondering

on and humming the pieces he thought his rivals were going to perform, since he had listened to some of them perform at other *prachan* events. He told me that if his rivals on the stage were an ensemble from R University, he knew that the strength and techniques of their *ranaat eek* player were equal to his own *ranaat eek* player. Then, he said that he was not overly concerned about this *prachan*, since he had already estimated the circumstances and prepared his strategy well for this battle through sound quality, speed, and a new arrangement.

Additionally, he also had a contingency plan for his performance, which was to prepare a *Sarama* (สะระหม่า) piece [52] - played by a *pii chawa* (a small quadruple-reed shawm) and a set of *klong khaek* drums – and a *haang phleeng* in case others performed those pieces, so he could respond instantly. Those pieces imply the meaning in music to respond to his rivals; for instance, *Sarama* generally means fighting or thrusting. As for the way of creating the meaning of a *haang phleeng, Khruu* Boonsang claimed that he usually created the melody of a *haang phleeng* and then adapted phrases of lyrics of Thai folk songs or pop songs (with the rhythmic pattern of western drum instruments such as the *cajon*, drum kit) that are well-known and have meaning in Thai musical society, into the course of the *haang phleeng.* He stressed that in *prachan*, there was usually some unexpected circumstance during the performance. Some ensembles might play against the game by performing a solo piece or a musical piece that had not been agreed before the competition. For example, the year before, his ensemble had a *prachan* with an ensemble from B university, and an unexpected situation occurred when that ensemble performed the *Bua Loy* (บัวลอย)[53] piece with a *pii chawa* (a small quadruple-reed shawm). *Bua Loy,* generally, signifies the death of people or a funeral event. This piece of music apparently was not in the rules agreed between the

[52] *Sarama* is a piece of music that is used on a number of different of occasions, including sword fighting, boxing and so forth.

[53] *Bua Loy* is one of a musical pieces performed at a Thai funeral to honour the person who has passed away. It is one of the high level and respectful pieces for musicians in Thai musical society.

ensembles. Since B University played against the rules of that competition, his ensemble had a conflict with them. Therefore, he said that for this *prachan*, he had to prepare his weapons (pieces of music) to protect his ensemble in case of an unexpected circumstance. Furthermore, he stressed that he had also prepared the *khayii* (ขยี้) technique for the *ranaat eek* to accompany a singer. This way of performance, he stressed, showed the musical intelligence of the music teacher or musician as having a great strategy in performance.

During my participation, over five days of *prachan* rehearsals with the Sit-Reungnond ensemble, each time *Khruu* Boonsang suggested that his students practise *prachan* pieces by using different techniques and improvisations in some specific melodies. It seemed that he tried to find a suitable and effective way for his students to perform in this competition. *Khruu* Boonsang also suggested that his students show musical techniques for each instrument in different ways in *prachan*. For instance, in the *Siibot* piece, he taught a *ranaat eek* player how to perform a whisper sound technique in a specific melody as well as showing hand movements for the *ranaat thum* and *khong wong lek* players in regard to how to use a *kwaat* (กวาด) or sweeping technique efficiently for several notes on their instruments at the *hua phleeng*. It seemed that *Khruu* Boonsang focused very much on his strategy by creating a *ranaat eek* solo and a new *haang phleeng* for the performance. For instance, in the *Tayoe Khameen* piece at the *saung chan* metrical level, he liked to show the *ranaat eek* solo; hence, he instructed other players to stop playing in order to show only the *ranaat eek* improvisation. Then, they performed together again at the end of that movement at the *saung chan* level. Additionally, after practising the main body of the *Tayoe Khameen* piece, they played the *haang phleeng* alongside using the *pii nai* instrument to play the melody of the Thai folk song '*Yom Phrabaan Chaokaa*', the lyric of which asks for a prince of devils to take this person/group to hell. *Khruu* Boonsang stressed that in this

kind of *haang phleeng*, he usually uses a *pii nai* to play the main melody or lyric (accompanied by a *cajon* drum), since it can produce a sound similar to a singer. Then, after they had played the *luukhmot* (ลูกหมด) section, *Khruu* Boonsang asked them to play a solo on each instrument alternately before finishing this piece with a *kwaat* technique together in the D sound. Throughout the time that I observed their rehearsals, I sometimes participated with them in music by helping them to play some rhythmic percussion such as the *ching* and *krab* to accompany a solo instrument and ensemble. Interestingly, after playing music with them it seemed that they became familiar with me and they provided me with a lot of information about *prachan* and its implications. It might be true that musical participation supports a person in assimilating significant knowledge of music and its context through the members of that specific culture. This reminded me of Mantle Hood's notion that participation in performance affords a great advantage in gaining information and a perception of its social context (Hood 1971:242). Through my participant observation in the *prachan* rehearsals with the Sit-Reungnond, I realized that in each rehearsal the performance of the Sit-Reungnond became more effective. Their performance was quite fast, elaborate and powerful. I was quite impressed with their musical competence, so I asked them about how they had developed their musical skills to be able to perform those complex techniques at high speed. They claimed that this was a consequence of '*kaan lai*'(การไล่). *Lai* (ไล่) is a specific word in Thai music terminology meaning individual practice by playing a specific musical piece for many hours to establish muscle strength in the wrists and arms. They stressed that *Khruu* Boonsang instructed them, particularly the *ranaat eek* players*,* to keep practising (*lai)* on the *ranaat eek,* covered by a sheet or towel on top of the wooden bars, in the *Moolong* (มู่ล่ง) piece. *Ranaat eek* player M said that before a *prachan* event, he usually had to organise his timetable for individual practice every day by waking up at 5am. He then undertook *lai* on the *ranaat eek* in the *Moolong* piece for

two hours continually - around ten rounds - before practising solo pieces, having breakfast and going to school. Arguably, *ranaat eek* players have to dedicate themselves to music by practising more than others. It could be said that the duty of a *ranaat eek* player is significant in a *prachan* ensemble. As *Khruu* Boonsang argued, the *ranaat eek* is the main feature of *prachan* performance, since it is considered to be the leader of a *piiphaat* ensemble. Additionally, having a highly-skilled *ranaat eek* player in the ensemble affords an effective strategy and variety of *prachan* performance. In *prachan* generally, we would judge a good musical ensemble by considering the potential and intelligence of the *ranaat eek* player.

Beyond the *prachan* process and strategy, an interesting aspect during the *prachan* rehearsals of the Sit-Reungnond was that the musicians were very confident about their performance and concerned about the term 'winner' in *prachan*. Interestingly, this came together with their strong feelings of protecting the fame of their music school from others. Moreover, they felt angry, happy and animated when discussing their experience in *prachan* and the conflict with their rivals. I was surprised by *Khruu* Boonsang's reaction when I asked him about a rumour in Thai musical society about the *prachan* between his ensemble and the T ensemble the year before. The problem occurred when the latter ensemble told other musicians that his ensemble had beaten the Sit-Reungnond in that competition. *Khruu* Boonsang responded to me with strong emotions, stating that it was impossible that his ensemble had lost in that competition. Even though the speed of the performance of his rivals had been faster than that of his ensemble, the sound quality of his ensemble had been better. Therefore, he wondered how his opponent could say that the Sit-Reungnond had lost in that event. He stressed that his ensemble, in practice, has never lost in *prachan.* Following this kind of concept, it seems that the meaning of being a winner in *prachan* is crucially important in the musicians' perception.

The Kamlai ensemble

I decided to participate in the *prachan* rehearsal of the Kamlai ensemble when I heard news from my musician friends that this ensemble would participate in the *prachan* event for the annual *wai khruu* ceremony at Wat Phra Phireen. This is because the Kamlai ensemble is well regarded among musicians as an adept *prachan* ensemble and also in public as a famous Thai contemporary music band. The Kamlai is a female *prachan* ensemble, led by Chaiyuth Tosa-nga (known as Pom), who is well recognised among Thai music circles as a famous *ranaat eek* player in *prachan* music. The Kamlai is apparently one of the musical ensembles under the Chaiyuth music school. The main musical instruments in this ensemble are played by female musicians - women and young women - alongside the two male drum players. In my fieldwork, I was allowed to participate in this rehearsal since I know Chaiyuth personally from when I was a *pii nai* player for his band in a *prachan* competition in 2002. Hence, he welcomed me to conduct an interview and make a video recording during his rehearsal for the competition. When I first attended a rehearsal of the Kamlai ensemble, I was astonished that it was taking place not in the teacher's house, as with the traditional style of Thai music schools, but at the house of one of the Chaiyuth's pupils in a quiet place away from the city.

During the rehearsal, it seemed that the usual custom in this ensemble is that Chaiyuth's pupils call him '*phii* Pom' (*phii* พี่ means older brother) and he calls them only by their nicknames. By and large, it can be said that Chaiyuth treated his students as his sisters and brothers. However, in the rehearsal he had his own teaching style, maintaining the distance between teacher and students. He did not complain to or rebuke his students directly when they made a mistake, but rather he kindly kept saying 'keep practising' a particular melody or section that his students could not do. Therefore, it might be said that the Kamlai (or Chaiyuth's music school) has its own educational

and relationships system in the form of a brother system. It seems that his students knew the pieces that they were going to perform for the *prachan* quite well, so Chaiyuth just provided them with instructions on his own techniques, cues and new arrangements for his composition of those pieces. He prepared his ensemble to perform three pieces in the *prachan* comprising *Phma Hea* (พม่าห่า), *Tayoe Yuan* (ทยอยญวณ) and a solo *ranaat eek* in *Nok Khamin* (นกขมิ้น).

Chaiyuth argued that *prachan* at present is mostly in the form of two or three pieces in a competition, which is quite different from the past. *Prachan* at present, such as the *prachan* at Wat Phra Phireen, is mostly associated with a way of mind reading or guessing what a rival will perform in the competition. This method, he argued, can only be learned through experience by participating in several *prachans* by which a rival's style and strategy from their performances in different events might be known. This helps him to prepare his band to be ready for the *prachan* with different plans. From Chaiyuth's viewpoint, in preparing for *prachan,* the various potentials of each musician are also related to the styles of the pieces and ensemble. Before a *prachan*, a teacher normally chooses a musician who has the ability to suit an instrument and piece or style of the ensemble. For instance, in a piece that uses a lot of *krau* (กรอ) technique, a teacher will choose a *ranaat eek* player who can make this technique more beautiful and flowing. In contrast, in a piece that emphasises big sound quality and speed, he will choose a person suited to that kind of technical character. In some cases, he might use the same player, but change the melodies or some sentences of that piece to avoid using those techniques. Chaiyuth called the strategy of observing or participating in *prachan* events and choosing musicians '*roprooikhrung chana rooikhrung*' (รบร้อยครั้งชนะร้อยครั้ง), which means one who knows the enemy while knowing he himself will not be in danger in a hundred battles.

Significantly, the Kamlai rehearsed the *Phma Hae* piece with a new arrangement and techniques. They started with *Rao Ching Dugdamban* (*รัวฉิ่งดึกดำบรรพ์*), showing the *ranaat eek* with the *khayee* technique and then demonstrated their exciting melodies in the *hua phleeng* piece before coming to a singing part at the beginning of the *Phma Hae* piece. When they performed this piece, I felt that the new arrangement of Chaiyuth was very fascinating in terms of the variety of melodic patterns and speeds at each metrical level (*saam chan*, *saung chan* and *chan diao*). Chaiyuth orchestrated the Kamlai ensemble at a very high level of performance by focusing on teamwork and showing the *ranaat eek*'s musical proficiency. I was surprised that Yo, a *ranaat eek* player, was able to play the *ranaat eek* efficiently in the ensemble at a very high speed and with complex techniques in both the *nua* (*เนื้อ*) (main melody) and the *luuk lau luuk khad* (*ลูกล้อลูกขัด*) (complementary and contradictory melodies). The distinctive feature of the Kamlai in this piece is the character of the Burmese dialect in the Thai piece with a variety of rhythmic drumming patterns, particularly at the *chan diao* metrical level and in the *haang phleeng*. In the *haang phleeng*, they showed a *klong yaao* (*กลองยาว*) rhythmic pattern through the *klong yaao* drum in the *phma* or Burmese dialect to accompany a *haang phleeng* piece '*Phma Klongyaao*' (*พม่ากลองยาว*) and ended with *luukhmot*, the finale section of this composition. From their rehearsal, it can be said that the Kamlai ensemble is very good at delivering the distinctive features of the Burmese dialect in the *haang phleeng.* I found that the *haang phleeng* was very significant in the *prachan* performance as the way of making the piece more entertaining and exciting.

Figure 4.2: The Kamlai ensemble rehearsing in *Phma Hae* piece. Chaiyuth Tosa-nga (in the brown shirt on the left) orchestrating his ensemble by playing the *ching* (a pair of small cymbals) and giving some guidelines for his pupils' performance

I was surprised during the rehearsal of the *Tayoe Yuan* piece at *chan diao* metrical level when Yo soloed the melodies of *Kraao Nai* (*กราวใน*) in this piece with different variations. Even though I know this piece quite well (as a highest level solo in Thai music), the method of changing melodies and techniques in different metrical levels in her performance was very unusual. Interestingly, her improvisation was somewhat exciting and fabulous. Chaiyuth informed me this performance method is called '*yown klade*' (*ย้อนเกล็ด*) which is the way of performing the melodies from the *chan diao*, *saung chan* to the *saam chan* metrical levels and then the procedure is reversed from the *saam chan*, *saung chan* to the *chan diao* metrical levels. Apparently, it is a way of showing musical competence through the expanded and contracted form of rhythmic cycle with the techniques and variation of melodies in a solo piece. Apart from *ranaat eek*, *khong wong yai*, *khong wong lek* and *ranaat thum* also soloed *Kraao Nai* phrases, respectively

showing their musical competence with complex techniques. It can be said that the *Kraao Nai* solo piece is part of Kamlai's musical strategy which is considered to be a significant weapon in responding to their rival in this *prachan.* They applied the melodies of *Kraao Nai* piece into the *Tayoe Yuan* (*thao*) piece by means of the main musical instruments playing solo.

It seems that the sounds and rhythmic pattern of the *klong khaek* (a pair of Thai double-headed drums) are very distinctive and more exciting in this ensemble. Chaiyuth said that in this *prachan*, even though his musicians were very young and less experienced in competitions, this issue could be resolved by the accompaniment of two professional drum players, Suphot and Ngo, powering this ensemble to be more distinctive and exciting. It might be said that the character and modern style of the *klong khaek* drums are the main factors supporting the performance of this ensemble. Those drum players argued that the rhythmic pattern of the *klong khaek* presently accompanying the *prachan* pieces has mostly changed to the modern style. From participating in the rehearsal of the Kamlai ensemble, I felt that the sounds and rhythmic pattern of the *klong khaek* in the modern style were fascinating and stimulating. Apparently, this modern rhythmic pattern is more sophisticated and complex in the detail supporting the various speeds and complex techniques of present *prachan* performance. The improvised technique of the Thai drum, called the '*saai*' (ส่าย), particularly for the *klong khaek*, is often used in *prachan* and is considered to be a modern style of *prachan* at present. Ngo, one of the *klong khaek* players in the Kamlai ensemble, claimed that the *saai* technique is always used in modern *prachan,* in which most drummers try to present excellent phrases of the *saai* in each piece in the competition to show their musical competence and knowledge.

Figure 4.3: Suphot and Ngo, two professional Thai drummers, showing their improvisation technique on the *klong khaek* drums, the '*saai*', in the modern style

In addition to the rehearsal, while eating several kinds of Thai food while having dinner with Chiyutt and his students, we had a long conversation about the *prachan* story and several techniques in competitions. Chaiyuth also revealed the story of his father, *khruu* Supot Toesa-nga, one of the great *ranaat* eek players in *prachan* music who was known as '*ranaat naamkhaang*' (ระนาดน้ำค้าง) (a *ranaat eek* who practises with the dew). The story of *ranaat naamkhaang* will be explained in a later section. He asserted that the method to perform on the *ranaat eek* well also relates to the way of stressing the sound on the left hand. In other words, a good *ranaat eek* player should play the left hand sound (the lower octave or notes) louder than the right hand (the higher octave or notes). This is because normally *ranaat eek* melodies are played in an octave with both hands, so the lower octave can support a player to control and balance

the sounds and speed as a whole during their performance. Chaiyuth argued that in performing *prachan*, the way in which players use and control their muscles during their performance is significant. The development and response of the muscles, particularly of the arms and wrists, affects the musical sound, speed, and character of their performance. He also argued that drinking spirits before *prachan* can help musicians to perform better, since it can warm their wrists and muscles ready for the performance. Additionally, in the rehearsal, I was surprised when I saw Yo, a *ranaat eek* player, warming up her wrists while waiting for other players, by playing a Moolong piece on the *ranaat eek* to the sound of a western metronome. Yo claimed that this is a practice method that is unique to Chaiyuth, practising the *ranaat eek* with Moolong at different speeds following the sound and tempos of the metronome. It can be said that this is a new and effective way of *kaan lai* or practising the *ranaat eek*, since it is parallel to the reality of performance in *prachan* when a *ranaat eek* player has to perform the main melodies alternately with complementary and contradictory melodies at different speeds. So, this practice method helps the *ranaat eek* player to make their muscles durable and get used to the varied speeds and techniques as in actual performance.

It seemed that Chaiyuth focuses very much on modern methods of practising and performing *prachan* through music technology. He usually asks his students to do their homework privately by listening to a CD or Mp3 recording of all of the pieces used in *prachan* before rehearsing together. He does this in order to save time in rehearsals, and also when some of his students have no time to rehearse with the ensemble. Additionally, in his view, adjusting microphones, mixers and amplifiers in a particular way is also considered to be a musical technique and musical strategy in *prachan*. The aspect of music technology in relation to *prachan* will be explained in Chapter 5. Regarding their perception in *prachan*, significantly, when I asked the players of the

Kamlai ensemble about their attitude towards *prachan*, they explained and embodied its significance as the most fascinating music activity of Thai music. Intriguingly, most of them argued that *prachan* is quite different from general Thai music performance. The environment of *prachan* and its pressure and excitement in competition impressed them and made them happy. Interestingly, I felt that most of these musicians were addicted to *prachan*. It can be said that the word *prachan* is meaningful in musicians' perception and they felt that *prachan* is part of their way of life.

Above, I described my experience of participating in the *prachan* rehearsals of two famous *prachan* musical ensembles, the Sit-Reungnond and the Kamlai. These ensembles have their own distinctive features in terms of their teaching/learning systems, styles of rehearsal and performance in *prachan*. Figure 4.4 below shows a comparison between the Sit-Reungnond and the Kamlai ensembles in terms of their styles of teaching and learning in *prachan* rehearsals and their views of *prachan*, and figure 4.5 illustrates the comparison between the ensembles in terms of their *prachan* musical strategies.

Figure 4.4: A comparison between the distinctive features of the *prachan* of the Sit-Reungnond and the Kamlai ensembles regarding their teaching/learning systems, relationships, style of rehearsing and performance, and their views towards *prachan*

Sit-Reungnond ensemble 'Father and children' (Family) system	**Kamlai ensemble** 'Brother' system
Rehearsing at teacher's home (music school)	No specific place for rehearsal, depending on the place and students available
Living (sleeping, eating) and rehearsing music together at teacher's home for several days. Sharing and helping each other in housework and performance in return to teacher Students absorb musical knowledge through environment.	Coming to rehearsal each day, but not overnight. Each time rehearsal depends on the availability of and negotiation between teacher and students
Teacher teaches and rebukes students when they make mistakes (as their own children) Students have to obey teacher	Teacher has a kind teaching style, but maintains the distance between teacher and students
Learning music together under the control of teacher. Teacher carefully checks every detail of each instrument in the ensemble including orchestration and solo pieces	Students have to do their own practice separately through CD or Mp3 recordings before rehearsing together with ensemble. Teacher will check the detail of each instrument in the ensemble including orchestration when they have a rehearsal together.
Focusing on traditional style of practice	Using music technology such as a metronome to support their music practice
Enjoying participating in *prachan*. Concerned about the term 'winner' in *prachan* and being energetic when discussing their experience of *prachan* and conflict with their rivals. Having strong feelings about protecting the fame of their music school from others.	Being fascinated with participating in *prachan* in terms of its excitement and the environment of competition. Feeling energetic and happy when participating in *prachan*. *Prachan* is a part of their life.

Figure 4.5: The comparison between the Sit-Reungnond's and the Kamlai's musical strategies in *prachan*

Sit-Reungnond's strategy	**Kamlai's strategy**
Preparing new musical arrangements Improving sound quality and speed	Using phrases from the solo piece *Kraao Nai* in *prachan* pieces with a new arrangement and performance method such as *yown klade* for the *ranaat eek* solo
Applying the *Sarama* piece and sets of *haang phleeng* with Thai folk and pop songs as a contingency plan to respond to others	Using the *haang phleeng* in different foreign dialects with solos by each musical instrument.
Using different foreign percussion instruments and their rhythmic patterns to support the *haang phleeng*	Using different foreign percussion instruments and their rhythmic patterns in complex and sophisticated style to support the *haang phleeng*
Focusing on musicians' musical proficiency in performance	Music technology, such as microphones, audio mixer, etc., is viewed as a part of the musical strategy in *prachan*

From the figure, we can see that there are many aspects that can identify the differences and similarities in the styles and way of learning *prachan* between these ensembles. From figure 4.4, we can see that the Sit-Reungnond ensemble (Sit-Reungnond music school) uses a father and children system in their rehearsals for *prachan.* This system is viewed as a traditional or old style in Thai music culture in which a teacher treats their students or pupils as family. This relates to the way of learning or rehearsing music by living together in the music school or the teacher's home. The teacher is similar to a father, who has the responsibility to give their children music lessons, provide them with food and a place to sleep and give them money. The students, as his children, in return have to help each other to do housework and perform. In this system, the teacher and students are like a family, so the teacher teaches music to

his students with his hospitality and sincerity. As 'family', he might rebuke his students or express his emotions when they make mistakes in playing music, while the students have to obey his instructions and orders. In contrast, the Kamlai ensemble is considered to be a modern style. It has a brother system, since the teacher, by and large, treats the students as brothers or sisters. However, the students do not normally rehearse at Chaiyuth's home (teacher's home), depending on the availability of students and places. Therefore, they do not live together or rehearse together as often as the Sit-Reungnond ensemble. During *prachan* rehearsals, Chaiyuth's students usually have music lessons with him during the day, and go home and come back again on the next appointed day. In the rehearsals of the Kamlai ensemble, Chaiyuth, as a teacher, was very kind, teaching music to his students, and did not complain to or rebuke them when they made mistakes in the rehearsal. In fact, he showed a polite manner and maintained distance between himself and the students.

As for music lessons, apparently the Sit-Reungnond uses a father/children system and they live together in the teacher's home; hence, they learn music together with the instruction of the teacher. Significantly, throughout the whole rehearsal, *Khruu* Boonsang was careful in checking in every detail of the melodies and improvisation of each musical instrument in the ensemble. His students always came to revise the *prachan* pieces together and then *Khruu* Boonsang would notice or give some ideas to his students later. The performance and techniques in *prachan* were developed day by day in rehearsals through the ideas of both the teacher and the musicians themselves. *Khruu* Boonsang orchestrated this ensemble by pointing out mistakes or inappropriate melodies and solos that occurred during the rehearsal or adjusting or creating new melodies, techniques, solos and small *haang phleeng* pieces that would suit the pieces and make the pieces sophisticated, powerful and meaningful. Apart from this, through this process of learning music, the musicians/students also developed their musical

skills and knowledge through the way of seeing, listening to, imitating, and exchanging musical ideas with their friends and teacher in the music school. In other words, they also learned music by absorbing the musical environment of the teacher's home. On the other hand, the Kamlai ensemble, as mentioned previously, is viewed as the modern style of teaching and learning as a brother system. Since they usually had a limited time for rehearsals and did not live together at the teacher's home, Chaiyuth asked his students to do their own homework by practising pieces separately with a CD or Mp3 recordings before coming to rehearse together with the ensemble. So, this method can save time for their rehearsal. Chaiyuth can do the orchestration for the ensemble straightforwardly and in detail when they have a rehearsal together. From participating in the Kamlai's rehearsal, it can be said that Chaiyuth tried to use a new method of rehearsing music apart from the traditional one. He also applied music technology to establish the musicians' skill, such as using a metronome to support a player practising the *ranaat eek* at different speeds to be ready for the real circumstance of the *prachan* performance, instead of the normal method of practising an exercise piece for one or two hours to build up muscle and power. Significantly, from the view of both ensembles, it seems that they share the same idea that *prachan* is very important in their musical life. The Sit-Reungnond were very sensitive when questioned about a winner and a conflict between their ensemble and their rival in a *prachan* competition. They tried to protect the fame of their music school by refusing to use the word 'loser' in regard to their past competitions. The Kamlai musicians showed a strong attachment and that they are really fascinated with participating in *prachan*, since it makes them feel energetic and happy, even though they know that it might cause a conflict between musical ensembles. Furthermore, both ensembles shared the same view that they enjoy participating in *prachan.* Indeed, *prachan* is part of these musicians' lives.

Regarding *prachan* strategy, from figure 4.5 we can see examples of the musical strategies of the Sit-Reungnond and Kamlai ensembles. There are similarities and dissimilarities in terms of their strategies and styles of performance. The Sit-Reungnond focuses on preparing and orchestrating a new musical arrangement and tries to improve the sound quality and speed of the musicians in their performance, whereas the Kamlai focuses on applying phrases from the solo piece *Kraao Nai*, for every main instrument in the *prachan* piece with a new arrangement and performance method, such as *yown klade* for the solo of the *ranaat eek*. With regard to the *haang phleeng*, the Kamlai has the distinctive feature of applying a *haang phleeng* with different foreign dialects and solo pieces in their own *prachan* piece, while the Sit-Reungnond had also prepared a contingency plan for their *prachan* by using the *Sarama* piece and sets of *haang phleeng* with Thai folk or pop songs in order to respond to and communicate with their rivals and the audience. Apparently, they share the same idea of using the rhythmic patterns of different percussion instruments such as the *cajon*, wooden fish, the *klong yaao*, and the *poeng maang*[54] to support the *haang phleeng* in different foreign dialects to be more entertaining and communicative. This reveals that both ensembles consider that the *haang phleeng* is a significant piece for responding to and communicating with others in present *prachan* competitions. The striking point that identifies the difference in the musical strategy between the Sit-Reungnond and Kamlai ensembles is their style of performing *prachan*. Significantly, the Sit-Reungnond focuses on the traditional way of practising and preserves the concept of traditional performance, that *prachan* should depend on the actual musical ability of the musicians. In contrast, the Kamlai ensemble uses a new method of music practice and a modern style of *prachan* by utilising a metronome in their music practice and also considering music technology such as

[54] The rhythmic patterns of *cajon*, wooden fish, *klong yaao*, and *poeng maang* percussion instruments are used to represent the Western, Chinese, Burmese and Mon dialects respectively in the *haang phleeng* in Thai music pieces.

microphones, audio mixers and amplifiers as a part of their musical strategy to support the quality of their performance in *prachan*.

One of the intriguing points regarding the different teaching and learning systems of the Sit-Reungnond and the Kamlai ensembles is that the representation of traditional and modern teaching/learning styles results in a different number of musicians and affects the stability of the music school. Arguably, the number of members of the Sit-Reungnond ensemble (Sit-Reungnond music school) is increasing each year, whereas the number of members of the Kamlai ensemble (Sit-Chaiyuth music school) is unstable and relatively decreasing. This shows that the different teaching/learning systems of each music school result in a different style of musicians' living and behaviour. The traditional Thai music learning system represents the concept that the teacher is like a father. He generally teaches music, provides food and a place to sleep and takes care of his students like his own children, and as a result, the students are grateful to their teacher, as their father, and in return play music for him at several events, as well as helping and supporting him however they can. Hence, even though some of them have already left this music school, for work, family or other reasons, they still return to help their teacher whenever he needs them. This is because they consider that they are family. This is why the musician members of the Sit-Reungnond music school are quite stable and their numbers are increasing with the advent of newcomers each year; this music school has a reputation. It might be said that the Sit-Reungnond has never lacked musicians to perform *prachan* according to the function of the father and children traditional system. In contrast, the Kamlai ensemble (Chaiyuth music school) is considered to use a modern style of teaching and learning relating to the lifestyle of the musicians and music school in modern society. It has less participation and the teacher-student relationships are not as close. Chaiyuth takes care of his pupils as brothers or students, but not as his children or family, so his students do not actually experience

participating and practising music all day at the teacher's home, eating and sleeping together, or helping and sharing knowledge with the teacher as family. Therefore, the relationships between the musicians and teacher in Chaiyuth's music school are not intertwined to the extent of those in the Sit-Reungnond. Furthermore, in modern Thai society, *prachan* music is not as highly esteemed as it was in the past and musicians cannot earn a good wage for their performances, so Chaiyuth's students are not able to perform as a full-time job. Since the number of musicians in his music school also relates to economic issues in modern Thai society as well as his use of the modern teaching/learning system for his *prachan* rehearsals, the musician members of the Kamlai or Chaiyuth music school are quite changeable, or even decreasing. In fact, Chaiyuth mostly lacks main musicians for *prachan* events so in practice he often has to find other musicians to supplement his ensemble in performances.

Additionally, there is no doubt why musician members of the Sit-Reungnond ensemble have strong views about the meaning of 'winner' and conflict in *prachan*. Apparently, they have a very strong opinion about protecting the fame of their music school, more than the Kamlai ensemble, since the traditional teaching/learning system, father and children, establishes a deep connection and feeling between those musicians and their teacher. Hence, they consider that their teacher and all of the students in the music school are like their own family. Of course they have to defend and protect the fame of their own family in *prachan*. As mentioned previously, even though the traditional system of teaching/learning music represents the close relationship between a teacher and students as father and children, which affects the existence and fame of a music school, it is very rare to find a music ensemble/school that retains this system nowadays, particularly in Bangkok. Evidently, the aspect of the development of Thai music in modern society is also related to the change in the style of teaching and learning Thai music. It might be said that due to the change and movement of Thai

music in modern society, the traditional way of learning and practising for *prachan* and Thai music has been replaced by a new concept of formal teaching and learning by means of the institutional system. The change in *prachan* performance and the power of institutions in modern Thai society will be explained in Chapter 5.

Music Lessons

Apart from *prachan* rehearsals and concerts, my learning of *seephaa* music during the fieldwork should be taken into consideration. During my fieldwork, in addition to collecting information both in rehearsals and at concerts, I took music lessons with *Khruu* Chaiya Thangmisi, who is renowned as a great musician and a respected music master in Thai music circles. *Khruu* Chaiya is regarded as a knowledgeable Thai music master who is working as a *piipaat* specialist in the Fine Arts Department of Thailand (Krom Silpakorn). I have to thank the Fine Arts Department of Thailand for providing me with a place and allowing me to learn *seephaa* music with *Khruu* Chaiya. Before starting the lessons, I talked to *Khruu* Chaiya regarding my purpose in learning *seephaa* pieces relating to my PhD thesis. He welcomed me as a PhD student interested in *prachan piiphaat seephaa*, and also as a student of his friend, *Khruu* Suvat, who is a *pii* (Oboe) player of the Department of Fine Arts. As there was a time limit for my fieldwork, I decided to ask *Khruu* Chaiya to teach me *seephaa* pieces that are fundamental and still being used at present. Hence, during my music lessons, I learned eight musical pieces - through the skeletal melody of the *khong wong yai* (large gong circle) – that are regarded as the standard pieces that have been used in *prachan piiphaat seephaa* from the past up to the present, comprising *Hoomroong Aiyareet*, *Phma Haathon*, *Cholakae Haangyaao*, *Siibot*, *Bulan*, *Tayoe Nauk*, *Tayoe Nai*, and *Tayoe Khameen*. Significantly, the music lessons with *Khruu* Chaiya contributed to my in-depth knowledge of *prachan piiphaat seephaa*.

Figure 4.6: My music teacher *Khruu* Chaiya Thangmisi, a *piiphaat* specialist from the Fine Arts Department of Thailand

In my music lessons with *Khruu* Chiya, I learnt much essential *seephaa* knowledge. For instance, when I started learning a piece from the *hoomroong* repertoire, I expected to learn a piece that I thought was a significant piece in this repertoire that was usually performed by Thai musicians at present, such as *Hoomroong Khaek Mon* (*โหมโรงแขกมอญ*) or *Hoomroong Kraaonai* (*โหมโรงกราวใน*). Hence, I asked *Khruu* Chaiya about learning one of these pieces because of my analysis of *prachan seephaa*. Surprisingly, *Khruu* Chaiya pointed out that in practice, *Hoomroong Aiyareet* (*โหมโรงไอยเรศ*) is the most important piece in the *hoomroong* repertoire, which musicians should learn and value more than others. This is because even though *Hoomroong Aiyareet* is viewed as the basic *hoomroong* piece in learning *piiphaat* music, this piece comprises different styles of melodies in four movements that represent the fundamental knowledge and musical skills of musicians from their performance, particularly a

ranaat eek player. The significance of this piece is widely known among music masters and adept musicians, but most *prachan* musicians at present do not know much about the value of this piece. From learning *Bulan*, one of the four main *seephaa* pieces, I found that even though this piece is generally viewed as a two-movement piece and musicians usually play each movement twice, in the second round of each movement some melodies or sentences are changed into a different style. Then, after playing the two movements, for example at the *saam chan* metrical level, musicians continue to perform an arrangement of the first and second movements. The arrangement of a movement is generally called *thaang plian* (*ทางเปลี่ยน*). Likewise, in the second round of these two arrangements, the melodies are also changed into a different style. From learning *Bulan*, I found that it is actually similar to an eight-movement piece. This is because it also comprises different styles of melodies in each movement and with an arrangement for those two movements, so musicians are supposed to memorise this piece as if it has eight movements. This piece is relatively distinctive in terms of the complex melodies and arrangements, since it is meant to show the composer's proficiency in composing a complex or sophisticated composition. Historically, there are three different versions of *Bulan* in *thao* (*เถา*) style – the versions of *Luang* Pradit Phairau (Sorn Silapabanleng) (1881-1954), *Caangwaang* Tua (Tua Phaattayakoson) (1881- 1938), and *Phra* Phleeng Phairau (Soum Suwatit) (1888 – unknown)[55]. It can be said that the complex melodies and the variety of different versions of the *Bulan* piece represent the highly competitive *prachan* among palaces and music schools in the past. Music masters/composers at that time competed with each other by showing their musical creativity through the musical arrangements of this piece. Significantly, in the

[55] By and large, the most famous versions are the versions of *Luang* Pradit Phairau (Sorn Silapabanleng) and *Caangwaang* Thua (Thua Paattayakoson) according to the intense *prachan* competition between the Bangkhorlahm and Bangkhunprome ensembles at the Ladawan palace in the reign of King Rama VII (1925-1935).

traditional concept of *prachan piiphaat seephaa*, *Bulan* and *Siibot* are viewed as the two significant pieces among the four main *seephaa* pieces. Musicians mostly perform these two pieces in *prachan* due to their complex and sophisticated style, which challenges and prove the musicians' musical proficiency.

While learning the *seephaa* pieces, I also learned a method for instruments to accompany a singer in different movements and pieces, called *rup raung* - *soeng raung* (*รับร้องส่งร้อง*). Traditionally, the musical method of *rup raung* - *soeng raung* is significant in *prachan piiphaat seephaa* competition as a way to show the potential of the musicians, particularly a *ranaat eek* or *pii nai* player, in applying their melody to harmonise with the melody of a singer in their performance. In Thai music terms, '*rup*' (*รับ*) and '*soeng*' (*ส่ง*) mean receiving and sending respectively, while *raung* (*ร้อง*) means singing. Hence, *rup raung* means the way of instrumentalists finding a way and suitable melodies to receive and support a singer by harmonising with the singer's melody before the end of the song, and then continuing to perform their instrumental part in the same movement that the singer sang previously. By contrast, *soeng raung* means that before the end of the instrumental part of each movement, the instrumentalists find a way to send or perform the proper melody to harmonise with the starting melody of a singer in the next movement. The fact is that the way of performing a *seephaa* piece with a singer is different from performing with instrumentalists alone. Therefore, even though the musicians know a piece quite well, they still cannot play with a singer in the proper way. Hence, they have to learn how to cooperate with a singer through their own melody. In my music lesson with *Khruu* Chaiya, I learned the musical method and techniques for *rup raung* - *soeng raung* with a singer, which broadened my mind in terms of a different perspective of performing *seephaa* and the significance of a singer in competitions. For example, in the *Siibot* piece, I found that in performing the second movement at *saam chan* metrical level, the melody and rhythmic cycle of the

instrumental and singing parts were not equal. Therefore, when the instrumentalists accompany a singer, they have to know the ending of the singer's melody that relates and connects to the main instrumental part in the same movement, and how to use the method and technique *rup raung* to accompany the singer harmoniously. Likewise, in the *Bulan* piece, for instance, I learned that in performing this piece with a singer in an arrangement of the first movement, at the end of this movement, the instrumentalists have to perform an extra *luuk thaw* (ลูกเท่า), one more rhythmic cycle, in order to *soeng raung* or to accompany a singer in his/her singing in the next movement.

Aside from learning the *seephaa* pieces and musical method, *Khruu* Chaiya also taught me how to analyse a musical piece in order to understand the fundamental structures and main melodies of the *seephaa* pieces in relation to their compositions in different styles and arrangements. Intriguingly, I found that the way of analysing and understanding musical pieces is also related to the way of choosing musicians with the right style and potential, particularly the *ranaat eek* player, for performing different musical pieces in *prachan*. For instance, *Siibot* is suitable for a *ranaat eek* player who has a good ability in performing a short sequence of melodies, whereas *Bulan* suits a player who is capable of performing a long sequence of melodies. It might be said that in *prachan,* the character and distinctive features of a *ranaat eek* player have to fit into the style and characteristic of such a composition. The story of *Khruu* Phuat Nakranaat, one of best *ranaat eek* pupils of *Luang* Pradit Phairau (Sorn Silapabanleng), with regard to the *Tayoe Nai,* is a good example of this. *Khruu* Chaiya claims that his music teacher, Boonyong Gatekong, told him that *Khruu* Phuat Nakranaat was one of the great *ranaat eek* players of the 20th century; however, when someone asked him to play the *Tayoe Nai*, he often refused and seriously complained about playing this piece. This is because *Khruu* Phuat was the type of a *ranaat eek* player who had the potential in *plaai-muu* (ปลายมือ) or playing well in a short sequence of melodies, but the *Tayoe Nai* is one of the

most difficult *prachan seephaa* pieces in the *tayoe* repertoire, mostly consisting of melodies in a long sequence, requiring a player who has the stamina to play melodies continually for a long period of time. *Khruu* Phuat did not like this piece very much, since this piece uses a lot of energy in performance and did not fit into his efficient style. In contrast, he preferred to perform the *Tayoe Nauk* piece, since that mostly comprises a short sequence of melodies, which suited his style and proficiency.

Beyond learning the *seephaa* pieces, method and analysis, I found that the significance of having a music lesson with a music teacher/master is not only in learning music itself, but also other elements of music. During the lessons, *Khruu* Chaiya usually taught me a *seephaa* piece alongside music history, which I found made me understand explicitly the features and development of the musical pieces. Significantly, some of the music history was also related to the concept of *prachan* in Thai music circles. For instance, when I had learned the *Tayoe Nauk*, during the lesson, *Khruu* Chaiya told me the history of this piece in relation to the *Tayoe Nai*, a piece that I had learned previously. Arguably, the *Tayoe Nauk* is a 'counter argument' or response to the *Tayoe Nai*. Historically, the *Tayoe Nai* is said to have been composed by *Khruu* Pheng (otherwise unknown), who is regarded as one of the great composers in the time of King Rama IV in Rattanakosin. It is considered to be the first *tayoe* piece and a prototype for the later *tayoe* compositions in the following ages. Even though the *Tayoe Nai* is viewed among musicians as the original *tayoe* and one of the most difficult pieces in the *tayoe* repertoire, the *Tayoe Nauk* is considered to be the most intellectual and sophisticated piece in the *tayoe* repertoire that is able to respond to the *Tayoe Nai*. Evidently, the *Tayoe Nauk* was composed after the *Tayoe Nai* in the same period by *Phra* Pradit Phairau (Mii Duriyaangkuun),[56] and is by and large accepted as a piece that has the same level and dignity as the *Tayoe Nai*. In practice, adept musicians know full

[56] *Phra* Pradit Phairau (Mii Duriyaangkuun) (King Rama I – King Rama V) is generally known as *Khruu* Miikhaek, who is regarded as the king of the *tayoe* piece.

well that the *Tayoe Nai* has the distinctive feature of a long sequence of melodies, particularly in the first movement, and it is principally in the *thaang nai* (*ทางใน*) or *Nai* scale. On the contrary, the *Tayoe Nauk* is considered to be a piece that has the characteristic of a short sequence of melodies, particularly in the *luuk lau luuk khad* (*ลูกล้อลูกขัด*) (complementary and contradictory melodies) and it is mainly in the *thaang nauk* (*ทางนอก*) or *Nauk* scale. Furthermore, regarding the characteristic of the *Tayoe Nauk*, interestingly the melodies at the beginning of the *Tayoe Nauk* are composed to open freely to show a solo by each musical instrument. It might be said that the *Tayoe Nauk* was intentionally composed to respond to the *Tayoe Nai*. In other words, it was a way of competing between two famous composers through their own compositions.

Apart from the music history, I found that the myths around *prachan* and the manners of the pupils towards their music teacher were also relevant to the music lesson. Many tales of *prachan* were revealed by the music teacher and students in my music lessons, describing entertaining and exciting stories of *prachan* and the legends of great music masters, providing several aspects of *prachan* knowledge. The impact of mythology and its significance will be explained in the next section. Furthermore, I also learned the manners of students towards their teacher from the environment of the music lessons. Significantly, in music lessons with *Khruu* Chaiya, serving their music teacher a cup of tea is accepted was an appropriate way for students to show their respect. I learned this by observing the behaviour of *Khruu* Chaiya's students or musicians of the Fine Arts Department, who usually asked *Khruu* Chaiya if he would like a cup of tea before a music lesson. They prepared a kettle and a cup on the tray and then poured tea into the cup for him in order to show their respect before having a lesson. Apparently, this made the teacher fully satisfied and pleased to give them a music lesson. Apart from this, the way of showing appropriate manners towards other senior musicians during the music lesson was also significant. It might be said that

having good manners towards the music teacher and others profoundly affects the way of learning and gaining musical knowledge in a music lesson. This is because the teacher and others largely justify whether or not they should support or pass on significant musical knowledge to a student or new member based on his behaviours and manners. Learning manners towards the music teacher and other musicians is one of the significant aspects in perceiving *seephaa* music and its culture. As mentioned above, there are various elements that are involved in the teaching/learning process of a music lesson. The figures below illustrate the elements of my music lessons.

Figure 4.7: An example of a *seephaa* music lesson, which represents the elements of the teaching/learning process

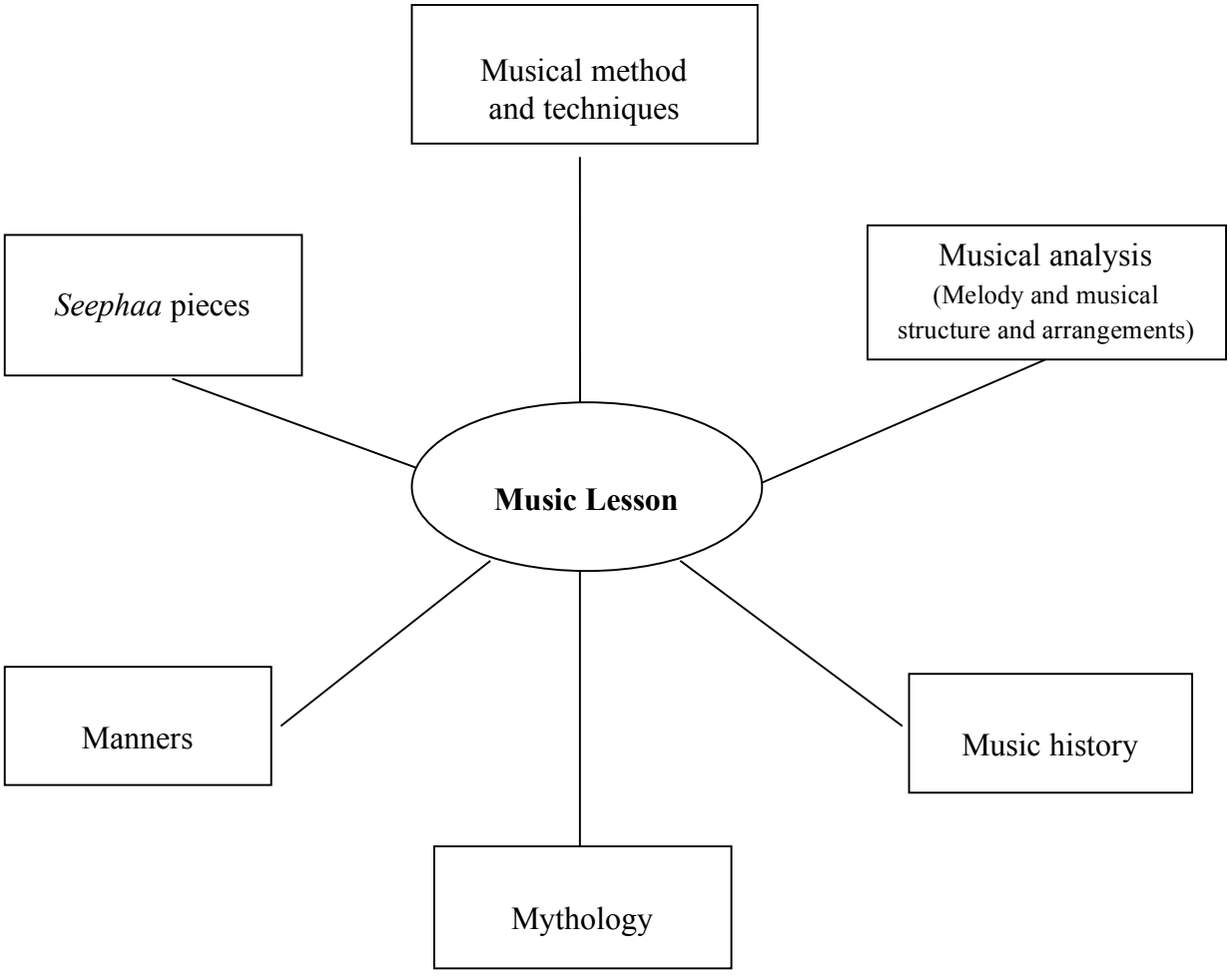
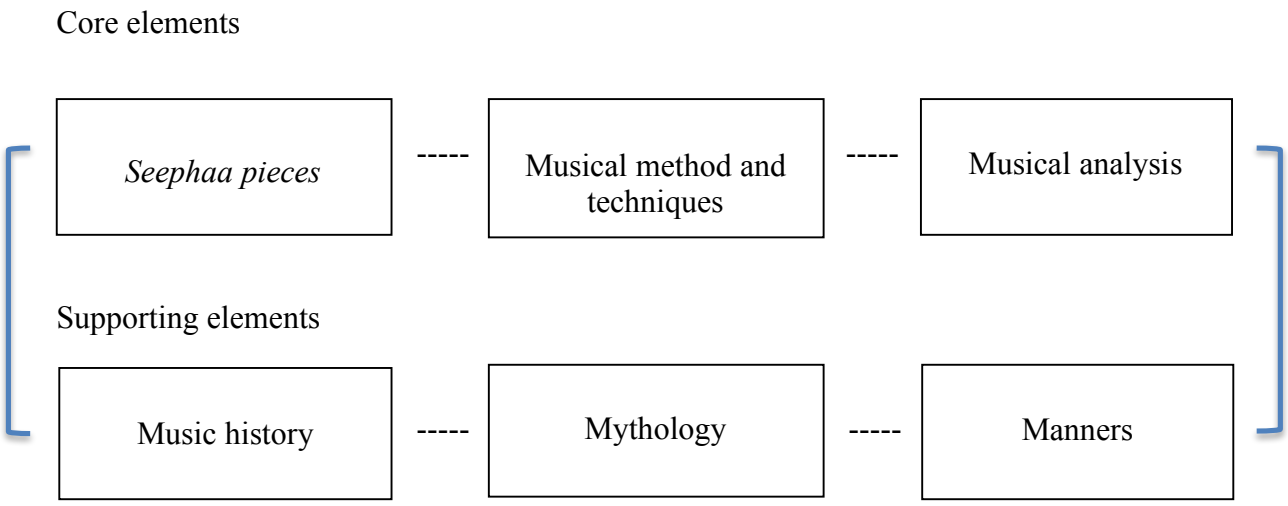


Figure 4.8: Illustrating the core elements and supporting elements of a music lesson and their relationship



From figure 4.7 we can see the elements of teaching/learning music and their relationship in a music lesson, comprising *seephaa* pieces, musical method and techniques, musical analysis, music history, mythology and manners. Figure 4.8 represents the fundamental idea of a music lesson, which can be separated into two domains, the music itself or the core elements (*prachan* piece, musical method and techniques and musical analysis) and the cultural concepts or supporting elements (music history, mythology and manners). From my experience in the music lessons, I found that even though the *seephaa* pieces, musical method and techniques, and musical analysis were viewed as the core elements of the teaching/learning process, it was not possible to understand this knowledge completely without perceiving the supporting elements. In other words, music itself cannot truly exist and be meaningful without understanding the cultural elements such as history, mythology, manners and so forth. In fact, music and its supporting elements are inseparable: they are intertwined with each other as core knowledge according to the concept of music integration. The supporting elements are viewed as significant elements of learning music to fulfil

musicians' perceptions in regard to *seephaa* music and *prachan*. As stated previously, it might be said that in *seephaa* music lessons, musicians do not learn just sounds or *seephaa* pieces, they also learn the way in which music connects with other things. In the process of learning *seephaa* or Thai music, in practice, learning music itself (such as sounds, melodies, techniques, structures) is also viewed as the starting point of perceiving other components of music, as mentioned previously, to fulfil their music perception. This is why several famous music scholars in Thai music such as Myer-Moro (1993), Silkstone (1993), and Deborah Wong (2001) took music lessons during their fieldwork in Thailand, since they knew full well that the procedure of a music lesson can reveal not only the concept of the music itself, but also the way in which people think about music and their culture. This might be an example of representing the value of teaching/learning music in music lessons through various aspects beyond music itself. In the next section I will explain the significance and power of mythology relating to the teaching/learning process in *prachan*.

Mythology

Another aspect that must be borne in mind is the fact that one of the significant features of learning and understanding *prachan* is through its myths. Significantly, I found that several myths relating to the stories of *prachan* and conflicts in Thai music circles were revealed during my fieldwork, in the *prachan* rehearsals, music lessons and interviews. Throughout the time of participating in *prachan* rehearsals and music lessons, I was investigating the involvement of myths of *prachan* and Thai music. Therefore, I started asking myself questions such as, why is mythology part of music? Is it significant? How does it work in the process of teaching/learning music or even in Thai music circles? Arguably, these questions can be answered through the stories and context of myths themselves. Hence, in this section I would like to give examples of mythology from my

experience of conducting fieldwork in *prachan* and Thai music circles. From my experience, the myths can largely be separated into two kinds: myths about *prachan* and myths about music practice. The examples of these stories are as follows.

There are several myths about *prachan*, of which one of the most popular among Thai musicians is the story of *prachan* between *Caangwaang* 'Sorn' (the name of *Luang* Pradit Phairau) from Wang Burapha (Burapha palace) and 'Cham' (the name of *Phraya* Sanauduriyaang) from the Royal *Phinphaat* Directorate. This story also appears in the book '*Luang Pradit Phairau* (*Sorn Silpabanleng*) *Maha Duriyakawee loom chao phraya hang usa khanae*' (The Maestro of the Chao Phraya Basin) by Anant Narkkong and Asdavute Sagarik, 2001. The story describes the formal *prachan* in 1900, in the period of King Rama V, when Sorn, a young proficient *ranaat eek* player of his highness Prince Panupun (Prince Burapha) in the Burapha ensemble was ordered to have a *prachan* with Cham, a great musician from the Royal *Phinphaat* Directorate ensemble. It was an intense competition for Sorn, since Cham was a great and respected *ranaat eek* player who had gained a reputation playing the *ranaat eek* in '*siang jerdja*' (*เสียงเจิดจ้า*), a full sound with a strong, bright and clear style. In the *prachan*, after both the Burapha and Royal *Phinphaat* Directorate ensembles had competed with each other in several pieces, from overture pieces to solo pieces (from *Phraya Sook* (*พญาโศก*), *Choet Nauk* (*เชิดนอก*) to *Kraao Nai* (*กราวใน*) solo pieces), they were still not able to find a winner. So, the *ranaat eek* players from both ensembles had to compete with each other again in the *Choet* piece, in order to judge the intellectual response and musical proficiency of the two *ranaat eek* players in *prachan*. Both players performed this piece and responded to each other in several movements continually in sequence, showing their speed, sounds and techniques on the *ranaat eek* and their different styles. Cham showed the old style of *ranaat eek* performance with strong, bright, clear sounds, using the old type of beater (with a big and thick head) but using a lot of energy to perform. In contrast,

Sorn performed in the modern style of *ranaat eek* by applying new techniques of the *ranaat eek* that create a thrilling and speedy performance. Furthermore, he created a new way of holding the beaters, which helped him to speed up his performance by controlling his wrists to release the strain from his arms. This new technique of holding the beaters helped his performance to be faster and more durable. Even though Cham performed very well with strong, bright and clear sounds, in the end he lost the *prachan*. He could not follow the speed of Sorn in the performance and suffered from *muu taai* (*มือตาย*) or numb and strained hand muscles due to over-stretching his hand muscles when playing at the highest speed, so he had to slow down the tempo of his performance and end the piece immediately. After ending this piece, his face was sweating, his body was shaking, and his hands clung rigidly to the beaters, which he could not release until his pupils helped him to free his hands.

One of the significant *prachan* between *Luang* Pradit Phairau (Sorn Silapabanleng) (1881-1954) and *Phraya* Sanauduriyaang (Chaam Suntharawaathin) (1866-1949) with the *pii nai* (quadruple-reed oboe) instrument is also recognised among *prachan* musicians nowadays. *Khruu* Pinit Chaisuwan pointed out that at that time there was a *prachan* between *Luang* Pradit Phairau and *Phraya* Sanauduriyaang with *pii nai* in the *Khaek Mon* (*แขกมอญ*) solo piece. Since this solo piece has three movements, each player had to play a solo after the singer sang in each movement. The *prachan* was meant to prove who was better in terms of the quality of playing the *pii nai* in the different variations of the melody, and in regard to the emotions of the three movements of this piece. This solo piece also proves the potential of a *pii nai* player who is able to create the best quality sounds and melodies in the low, middle and high registers of the *pii nai* in the three movements. In the competition, *Luang* Pradit Phairau performed this piece nicely in three movements with one oboe reed. However, unexpectedly, when *Phraya* Sanauduriyaang performed, he played a *pii nai* solo in this piece using three oboe reeds,

swapping the reeds after each movement. In other words, he prepared three types of reed to suit the solo styles and melodies of the three movements. As a result, *Phraya* Sanauduriyaang won this competition, since he was able to control and make a better quality sound when playing the solo in this piece than *Luang* Pradit Phairau. After that event*, Luang* Pradit Phairau tried to challenge *Phraya* Sanauduriyaang several times to compete with the *pii nai* again, but *Phraya* Sanauduriyaang refused and never had any *prachan* with him again.

As for the *prachan* rehearsal of the Sit-Reungnond ensemble in my fieldwork, during the rehearsal, *Khruu* Boonsang, the music teacher and owner of the Sit-Reungnond music school, told his students about the *prachan* story between *Khruu* Boonyong Gatekong (1920-1996) and *Khruu* Prasit Thawon (1921-2001), two great *ranaat eek* players and respected music masters in Thai music circles. Once in the *wai khruu* ceremony at *Luang* Pradit Phairau's house, there was a *prachan piiphaat seephaa* between the students of *Luang* Pradit Phairau, in which, at that time, everyone expected to see a competition between two excellent *ranaat eek* players; Boonyong Gatekong and Prasit Thawon, who were students of *Luang* Pradit Phairau. For several months before this *prachan*, other students of *Luang* Pradit Phairau told him about their preferences in *prachan* and asked him to arrange a *prachan* including a *ranaat eek* solo piece between both players in the *wai khruu* ceremony. Hence, *Luang* Pradit Phairau specified the *Khaek Mon* solo piece as the solo piece for their *prachan.* Then, he asked *Khruu* Boonyong and *Khruu* Prasit to learn this solo piece with him privately in different styles before the *prachan* at the *wai khruu* event. On the day of the *prachan*, after they had performed all of the *seephaa* pieces and came to the solo section, *Khruu* Boonyong played a solo of this piece brilliantly and forcefully followed his style and the way that he had learned from *Luang* Pradit Phairau. Nevertheless, after he had played his solo of this piece, at the end of the *saam chan* metrical level, which normally should be the

ending of the general solo piece, unexpectedly he did not stop playing but kept performing this piece at the *saung chan* and *chan diao* metrical levels, as the *thao* form, beyond the lesson that he had learned from *Luang* Pradit Phairau. Suddenly, *Khruu* Prasit and all of the students turned to *Luang* Pradit Phairau, as they were curious as to why he had taught *Khruu* Boonyong this solo piece, in *saung chan* and *chan diao,* more than *Khruu* Prasit. *Luang* Pradit Phairau immediately waved his hand to indicate that he had not taught *Khruu* Boonyong that solo expansion and then pointed his finger to *Khruu* Boonyong during his performance*,* to signify to everyone that *Khruu* Boonyong himself had created his solo in *saung chan* and *chan diao*. *Khruu* Boonsang claimed that the reason why *Khruu* Boonyong had done that was because, from his experience, he knew quite well that the style and melodies of the solo piece that he had learned from *Luang* Pradit Phairau would not compare with that of *Khruu* Prasit. As he did not want to lose in this *prachan*, he had decided to create his own solo melodies in the *Khaek Mon* piece in *saung chan* and *chan diao* and had added those into his performance in the *prachan* in order to respond to *Khruu* Prasit.

The story of Seupsuit Duriyapraniit (known as *Khruu* Kai), one of the legendary *ranaat eek* musicians from the Duriyapraniit music school, is well recognised by all *prachan* musicians. The legend is about his performance during the *prachan piiphaat seephaa* at the *wai khruu* ceremony (Thai teacher homage ceremony) of *Luang* Pradit Phairau at Baanbaat. The *Wai khruu* or teacher-homage ceremony at Baanbaat was by and large recognised as one of the biggest *wai khruu* events of Thai music circles at that time. The participants in this event were mostly the students of *Luang* Pradit Phairau and some musicians who were familiar with him. They came to this event to show respect and their development in music to *Luang* Pradit Phairau, as a great master. For this reason, those musicians arranged the performance, called *bunleng thawaai muu* (*บรรเลงเพลงถวายมือ*), as a *prachan piiphaat seephaa* between the ensembles. One year,

during the solo section between the three ensembles of the *prachan seephaa*, after the *wai khruu* ritual, when the third ensemble ended their *Khaek Mon* solo piece, *Khruu* Kai and his friend from the Duriyapraniit music school, who was at the event, unexpectedly took a *ranaat eek* instrument from the other ensemble in the *prachan* and put it in the place of the third ensemble. Then, *Khruu* Kai played a *ranaat eek* solo from the *Kraao Nai* piece, the highest level solo piece in Thai music, with the accompaniment of the percussion *saung naa* (สองหน้า) and *ching* (ฉิ่ง) played by his friends. His performance was undoubtedly brilliant, vigorous, technical and clear, played at the highest speed, and it surprised and impressed musicians and audience alike. When *Luang* Pradit Phairau heard his great performance, he was annoyed. Then he suddenly asked all of his students to play solo *ranaat eek* in the *Kraao nai* piece to respond to *Khruu* Kai. Nevertheless, not one of his students dared to respond to *Khruu* Kai; this made *Luang* Pradit Phairau very angry.

Regarding myths of music practice, one of the distinctive myths is the legend of *Luang* Pradit Phairau himself (Sorn Silapabanleng) (1881-1954) with his *ranaat eek* practice when he was a music teacher at *Baangkhauhlame* palace, a palace of HRH Prince Yugaka Dughambara, Prince of Lopburi, in the reign of King Rama VII (1925-1935). This story is well recognised amongst music masters and adept musicians. The story is about the music practice of Sorn at that time. Sorn usually woke at four in the morning to practise the *ranaat eek* in the music room until six o'clock. Normally, he listened for the sound of a tram coming out of the garage to signal his wake-up time every morning. However, one day Sorn came back from a music event to the palace in the evening and, tired, fell asleep. Then, he awoke to the sound of a tram and ran to practise music, as was his schedule. However, this time, he woke at the wrong time, since the tram that he had heard was running to park in the garage at night (10pm); it was not the tram running in the morning (4am). Sorn did not realise that he had woken

at 10pm, so he started practising several *ranaat eek* pieces in sequence as usual. During the time that he was practising the *ranaat eek*, the Prince of Lopburi, who was in his room, heard the sounds of the *ranaat eek* from the music room and was surprised that Sorn was practising music at night. In the meantime, Sorn, who had been practising music continually for around two hours, wondered why he could not see the sunrise in the morning at the usual time (around 6am). At that moment, he realised that he might have mistaken his waking time. Therefore, he decided that he would not stop practising until the morning. The Prince of Lopburi, who had been listening to the music practice of Sorn for a long time, past midnight, was impressed by his strength of practice on the *ranaat eek*, so he made a commitment to himself that he would not sleep if Sorn did not stop practising. In the end, when Sorn saw the sunrise signifying the morning, he stopped practising and that was the end of a long eight hours' continuous practice (from 10pm to 6am). When the Prince of Lopburi heard that Sorn had stopped practising, he came to the music room. He found that Sorn could not release his hand from the beaters, since his hand muscles were strained and numb; hence, the Prince of Lopburi helped him to release his hands. In the end, since the Prince of Lopburi was impressed with Sorn's musical strength and competence, he gave him his beloved luxury ring as a reward for being a great musician.

In my music lesson, *Khruu* Chaiya also told me the story of the legendary musician Seupsuit Duriyapraniit (known as *Khruu* Kai), as mentioned above, from the Duriyapraniit music school. He told me that his music teacher *Khruu* Boonyong Gatekong (1920-1996) (Thai National Artist 2531/1988, Thai music) had told him this story. During a *prachan* in a temple, after playing the ensemble pieces, *Khruu* Kai and the other player responded to each other in solo pieces on the *ranaat eek*. They responded to each other in several solo pieces, but were not able to overcome each other, until they had no more pieces with which to respond. However, since it was a two-day

event, at the end of the first day of performance, *Khruu* Kai went to visit and asked *Khruu* Boonyong to compose a solo of the *Phraya Sook* piece at the *hok chan* (*หกชั้น*)[57] metrical level for him to overcome the other *ranaat eek* player the following day. *Khruu* Kai learned this long solo piece on the *ranaat eek* by trying to memorise the whole piece in detail including the melodies and complex techniques, until *Khruu* Boonyong was very tired and went to bed. When *Khruu* Boonyong got up in the morning, he was surprised to see *Khruu* Kai still practising this solo piece continuously and seriously. This meant that *Khruu Kai* had been practising this piece all night without any rest. Then, the next day *Khruu* Kai used this piece to compete with the other ensemble. *Khruu* Boonyong said that the way that *Khruu* Kai could memorise the long solo piece continuously in one night without any rest showed that he had a very strong mind in overcoming his rival in *prachan*.

Stories about practising the *ranaat eek* were also revealed in my participation in the Kamlai ensemble's *prachan* rehearsal. One of the interesting stories is the method of practising the *ranaat eek* of *Khruu* Supot Toesa-nga, a great music master of the Suphot music school. Chaiyuth Tosa-nga, a music teacher of the Kamlai ensemble, as mentioned previously, told the story of his father, *Khruu* Supot Toesa-nga, and his method of practising the *ranaat eek*. *Khruu* Suphot created an exquisite method of practising music, particularly for the *ranaat eek*, in order to establish the muscles and power of players. The significant feature of this method is to practise the *ranaat eek* outdoors in winter, around November and December. A musician has to practise the *ranaat eek* outdoors at around 4 or 5am, which is when the dew drops from the air will fall onto his wrists or onto the surface of the wooden bars of the *ranaat eek* instrument. Then, he has to keep playing until the dew on his wrists or on the *ranaat eek* is dried up by the sun. This practice method is called '*kaan lai ranaat naamkhaang*' (*การไล่ระนาดน้ำค้าง*),

[57] *Hok chan* or *sii chan* is an expanding composition from the *saam chan* metrical level. However, by and large, the solo piece used in *prachan* is usually at the *sam cham* metrical level.

which means the way of practising the *ranaat eek* with the dew or *naamkhaang*. Apparently, since *Khruu* Supot used this method to practise, he was well recognised among Thai musicians as *ranaat naamkhaang.*

Above, I presented examples of myths of *prachan* and music practice that were revealed in my fieldwork in *prachan* rehearsals and music lessons and in Thai music circles. By and large, myths of *prachan* describe the stories and circumstances of great music masters or famous musicians in *prachan* in Thai society, representing the styles of performance, musical techniques and strategies used in *prachan*. These tales are generally legends about practising music for long hours and methods of establishing musical competence. Aside from this, implicitly, these stories give rise to significant information representing in-depth knowledge of *prachan* and Thai music culture. This knowledge of the myths of *prachan* illustrates: first, the development of musical techniques and styles of *prachan*, as in the *prachan* story of *Caangwaang* 'Sorn' from Burapha palace with 'Cham' from the Royal *Phinphaat* Directorate, during which Cham used the old style of playing the *ranaat eek* with a strong, bright, clear performance - with the big, thick heads of the beaters, which require a lot of energy to perform – to compare with Sorn's new musical techniques and method of holding the beaters for the *ranaat eek* to make his performance more exciting and speedy; second, the features of musical response in *prachan* through musical strategies, as in the story of the *prachan* with the *pii nai* instrument, as mentioned above, when *Phraya* Sanauduriyaang defeated the other player in competition by using three reeds for the *pii nai* for the three movements to produce the best sound quality in the *Khaek Mon* solo piece, or the way that *Khruu* Boonyong tried to overcome *Khruu* Prasit by playing a solo from the *Khaek Mon* piece in the *thao* (*saam chan, saung chan and chan diao*) style; and third, the musical battle or conflict between musicians and musical ensembles, which can be viewed as part of Thai music circles. On the other hand, myths about

music practice imply ways of practising music and the qualification of being a great music master with determination and dedication to music. Significantly, this also connotes encouragement for musicians to practise music to become great performers.

In *prachan* rehearsals and music lessons, myths work efficiently as a seductive apparatus to instil concern in musicians about their music and to shape their mind in regard to the concept of *prachan* and music culture. In my *prachan* rehearsals, a teacher usually told these stories to his pupils, who were impressed by the legends of great masters and at the same time acquired musical knowledge from those stories. Following this kind of aspect, mythology is one of the significant factors of learning music or *prachan.* It comprises the various great stories from music masters and musicians relating to musical techniques, strategies, and music history, and is also a method of teaching and morality that is used in *prachan* and music practice. This is why most musicians are interested in and fascinated by mythology. Evidently, the concept of mythology and its significance in music lessons and being accepted as general knowledge in musical society also appears in other music such as *gender wayang* music in Bali (Gray 2011:43, Gold 1998:15-18), and Indian Classical music (Neuman 1990:31-43). As mentioned previously, it might be said that mythology plays a key role in *prachan* and Thai music society. Most importantly, mythology has its own power to motivate and attract listeners to follow its stories as living stories. Intriguingly, musicians who listen to the story of *prachan* mostly feel energetic, enthused and determined to participate in *prachan*. Furthermore, in my fieldwork, I found that most music teachers and even the musicians themselves shared their stories with others as a way of communicating, teaching, and clarifying musical knowledge. Arguably, the way in which mythical stories are shared in Thai music circles can be viewed as a way of confirming the existence and value of mythology in those circles. Even though mythology is something that can include both true and false stories, the crucial point

about learning mythology is to understand a clue about human life and experience. Hence, in Thai music circles, learning mythology is a way of understanding a clue about musicians' lives and experience through the stories of their activities and behaviours. Myths about *prachan* and music practice provide significant insightful knowledge and remind musicians and people about their own music, activities and culture. With this approach in mind, perceiving mythology is a way of acquiring and absorbing *prachan* knowledge and music culture to become a well-rounded musician in Thai music circles.

Conclusion

We began this chapter by describing and clarifying the process of *prachan* rehearsals between the Sit-Reungnond and Kamlai ensembles, by showing the comparison of the styles and process of the 'Father and Children' and 'Brother' teaching/learning systems as representations of traditional and modern systems pertaining to musicians' relationships in Thai music circles, and also examples of musical strategies used in *prachan* competitions. We noted that music lessons with *Khruu* Chaiya comprise six elements of music learning: *seephaa* pieces, musical techniques, musical analysis, music history, mythology and manners. We found that the striking feature of music lessons is not only learning music itself, but also the other elements of music. In fact, the supporting or cultural elements such as music history, mythology and manners are significant in fulfilling the musicians' perception about *seephaa* music and *prachan*. We found that mythology plays a significant role in *prachan* rehearsals and music lessons as well as in Thai music circles. In both *prachan* rehearsals and music lessons, myths were revealed as the great stories of Thai music masters or adept musicians relating to musical techniques, strategies, history, methods and morality. This mythology provides insightful knowledge about music and its relevance. It has its own power to convince listeners to follow its stories and shapes

their minds to perceive the concept of *prachan* and the way in which people and musicians think about their music and culture. In the following chapter I shall present the changes and trends in *prachan phiiphaat seephaa* in modern Thai society that have had an enormous impact on both the *prachan* process and musicians' and audiences' perceptions of *prachan.*

Chapter 5: *Prachan* in the Modern World

One of the significant factors in understanding the *prachan* concept and process is its change and development in modern Thai society. The notion of musical change in the modern world has become a subject of broad discussion among scholars of music in different cultures such as *Samulnori: Korean Perussion for a Contemporary World* by Keith Howard (2015), *Focus: Gamelan Music of Indonesia* by Henrry Spiller (2008), and *Musical Creativity in Twentieth-Century China: Abing, His Music, and Its Changing Meanings* by Jonathan Stock (1996). These writings demonstrate that, in fact, the idea of musical change due to modernisation is significant and inseparable from ways of understanding the development of music and its identity.

Nettl (2005:277-279) argues that the notion of musical change at present is highly complex and to varying degrees involves the change in musical systems, style, a piece of music, repertoire, conceptualisation and behaviour, and so forth. The significant aspects of musical change in the twentieth century, he asserts, in western and other music, are the change in musical language, new technology (from amplification to the all sorts of electronic devices and new ways of recording and transmitting music), types of sounds through electronic products (which can produce noise and small intervals that have been acknowledged in the musical system), social contexts, audiences, and participants (2005:280-281). The notion of musical change due to modernisation has become controversial among *prachan* musicians and music scholars as it represents the changing values and developments in Thai music at present. Contemporary *prachan* is associated with this concept of change as there has been modification and adaptation in the *prachan* concept, structure, and form in modern society. Therefore, it is very intriguing to explore the development of and changes in *prachan* at present, particularly through the influence of institutions, forms and formats, as well as music technology

and media. The term 'modern Thai society' in this thesis pertains to Thai modernisation after the Thai (Siamese) revolution of 1932.[58] This was a significant marker of social change and the development of Thai society and culture.

The official and public institutions have a significant impact on the whole picture of *prachan* and Thai music in modern society. *Prachan* music traditionally relies on music schools involved with a range of extra musical networks in Thai music circles. However, as institutions such as universities and the Fine Arts Department of Thailand have become more influential and supportive of musicians and Thai music performance in modern society, and there has been a decline in music schools/homes, this has changed musicians' relationships and their attitudes in *prachan* competitions. This has given rise to the change in and development of the *prachan* concept, process, and style in Thai music circles. I will investigate the influence of institutions on *prachan* music through the *prachan* 11th *Piiphaat Seephaa*-tii-Wang Naa in my fieldwork. This was a serious *prachan* competition between six official institutions comprising four military services, Music Division - Culture, Sports and Tourism Department/Bangkok, and the Fine Arts Department of Thailand. This will reveal the transformation of musicians' relationships in terms of music schools and official institutions, which has also led to the changes in the teaching/learning system in Thai music culture. This will illustrate the changes in the relationships of *prachan*.

Arguably, the changes and trends in musical forms and formats of *prachan* is one of the significant aspects in understanding musical development and its existence in modern Thai society. It can be said that *prachan* forms and formats at present have been developed and adapted into the modernisation approach. In this section, I will explore the *prachan piiphaat seephaa* musical formats and their contracted form from my fieldwork to compare them with the standard format in 1923. I will then illustrate the

[58] It was also the year of change in Thai political system from Thai absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy under a system of parliamentary democracy

comparison of *prachan* formats between standard, *ngaan prachan piiphaat naa phratiinang* event (*งานประชันปี่พาทย์หน้าพระที่นั่ง*) (1985), and contemporary (2012-13) from my fieldwork to show the change in *prachan* formats from the past to the present. Myers-Moro's idea about the contracted form of *piiphaat seephaa* musical format will also be built on to uphold the variety within *prachan* structure. Apart from this, I will reveal the development and trends in contemporary *prachan piiphaat seephaa* through the concept, form, *hua phleeng* and *haang phleeng* pieces, as well as the high-speed performance and the application of the *klong khaek* drums in competitions.

Music technology and media have had an enormous effect on *prachan*. It might be said that music technology plays a key role in *prachan* in modern society. In this respect, I will clarify how *prachan* musicians make use of music technology to enhance their achievement in competitions at present. During my fieldwork, I found that musicians tried to use microphones, amplifiers, and audio mixers to increase the volume of their performance and to respond or communicate with others in the *prachan*. The idea of amplification also upholds the musical value in Thai music culture. It represents a musical combat through sound and power. This raises the controversial aspect of the advantages and disadvantages of music technology for *prachan*, which leads to the question of whether music technology can represent the reality of musicians' competence in competitions. Needless to say, media is a significant aspect of the change and development of *prachan* at present. Media is viewed as a medium or a potential equipment that musicians can use to communicate, persuade, and disperse their music and information to others. It also reminds people about their music in terms of its change and development. I will clarify the effects of media on *prachan* competitions in relation to musicians' behaviour and culture. I will describe the impact of a famous Thai traditional music film '*โหมโรง*' (*Hom Rong*) or 'The Overture' in 2004 on the concept of *prachan* and Thai music as a whole. Apart from this, the significance of media such as

iPads, video cameras, audio recording, and social media such as YouTube to the development of *prachan* performance will be revealed. In particular, YouTube has very much influenced the practice and theory of contemporary *prachan* as it can be used as a potential apparatus to gain information and broaden musicians' knowledge and styles from others through social networking. This also includes the *prachan* rehearsal process and musical strategy, which has a significant impact on *prachan* musicians' way of life. In this chapter I will explore the three differing aspects in response to the changes and trends in *prachan* in modern society including the transformation of musicians' relationships in terms of music schools and institutions, the changes and trends in musical forms and formats, as well as the impact of music technology and media on *prachan*. This will help us to understand the movement and value of contemporary *prachan* in Thai music circles. These aspects will be categorised into three sections: changes in relationships, changes and trends in forms and formats, and changes in mediation.

Changes in Relationships

In the past, being a *prachan* musician or having a *prachan* ensemble was an opportunity to declare the fame of a music school and also to increase the wages of an ensemble. Being a *prachan* musician implies being a professional musician, one who can gain a higher status in Thai music circles, and an employer will hire such an ensemble at a higher rate for a performance. Hence, this might be one of the significant reasons why *prachan piiphaat* in the past was highly competitive. However, nowadays, the circumstance of being a Thai musician has changed, since the value of music in modern Thai society has changed. There are many reasons for the change in musical value beyond the trend for western music or pop music in Thai society. Evidently, after the crisis in the Asian financial economy in 1997 and the development of sound recording

tapes and CDs, fewer people wanted to hire *piiphaat* ensembles. Thai musicians and music circles experienced difficult times during the economic crisis, as most Thai people were not able to afford *piiphaat* music for their entertainment and ceremonial purposes. This also relates to the development of sound recording tapes and CDs, which contributed to economic savings for people requiring *piiphaat* music at events during that time. For instance, at a Thai funeral - a regular event and main income supporting the living of *piiphaat* musicians - people mostly used tapes or CDs of *piiphaat* Mon funeral music to accompany the ceremony instead of live *piiphaat* music. Significantly, those aspects together with the high esteem for foreign music and pop music and the lack of adaptation of Thai music in modern Thai society have seriously affected the value of *prachan* music and *piiphaat* musicians' way of life up to the present. Hence, *piiphaat* players nowadays cannot make a living as full-time musicians. Many of them have had to change to different careers such as bank clerk, salesman, actor, artist, music teacher and so forth. The way that most adept musicians choose to survive with their beloved music in modern society is to work for a government service or formal institution, as a musician or music teacher, affiliated to the music department of that institution. This is because a public or official institutions can secure a living salary and provide an opportunity to progress in Thai music. Arguably, this can be viewed as the rise of professional institutionally supported musicians.

As for the effects of institutions on music, Stock (1996) illustrates the impact of conservatories on modern Chinese music in the twentieth century, which have had an enormous impact on the development and reinterpretation of Abing's music in respect to the national ideology. He asserts that the process of 'conservatorization' is significant, as the conservatory become a primary cultural institution resulting in musical change and transmission (1996:161). This prompted me to realise the power of institutions on *prachan* music with the transformation of musicians' relationships in modern Thai

society. It might be said that the affiliation of musicians to official institutions also identifies the contemporary *prachan*, which is very much involved with the competition between institutions rather than music schools themselves. This also relates to the change in the Thai musical learning system from traditional music schools to the institutional system in modern society. The dominant power in music through the institutional control also represents a limitation to musical styles and diversity in *prachan* and Thai music. This also contributes to the aspect of preserving the standard and tradition of *prachan*.

By and large, there are six official Thai institutions that adept musicians would like to be affiliated to, comprising four military bands (Royal Thai Navy, Royal Thai Army, Royal Thai Air Force as well as Royal Thai Police), Music Division - Culture, Sports and Tourism Department/Bangkok, and the Fine Arts Department of Thailand (Krom Silpakorn). However, it is quite competitive to find a job as a musician in an official institution. Hence, in order to attract interest from those institutions, musicians have to be famous or well-known among Thai music circles. In traditional Thai music, the way that musicians become well known in society is through the *prachan* competition. This is a significant arena for *piiphaat* musicians to present their musical proficiency and intelligence to the public. This is because *prachan* is a place of social gathering where people come to meet and listen to music together. For instance, *prachan* Wat Phra Phireen, as in my fieldwork, is one of the famous temples of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* (since 1970) comprising famous musicians, music masters, dancers, actors, celebrities, comedians, students and so forth. As I mentioned in Chapter Two, this temple is a platform for promoting famous musicians and ensembles to be accepted in Thai musical society. By and large, a *prachan* event is also a place where great *piiphaat* musicians in Thai musical society can be found. It is a place where talent scouts from music departments go to find excellent musicians to attract to their institutions. Evidently, many famous *prachan* musicians are sounded out after *prachan*

competitions, most of which are affiliated to the music departments of the six official institutions. Krom Silpakorn or the Fine Arts Department is renowned as a great department of music, since it is a place comprising many excellent musicians from different music schools. Most musicians would like to be affiliated to this institution to progress their career in a famous department and also to gain an opportunity to perform in several foreign countries. As mentioned previously, *prachan piiphaat seephaa* at Wat Phra Phireen is a good example of this aspect. It is a famous *prachan* event that takes place once a year. Famous *piiphaat* musicians usually come to this temple to participate in *prachan* and, after the competition, most are sounded out by talent scouts to be affiliated to the official institutions.[59]

The movement of traditional musicians to official institutions arguably gives rise to a new perspective of *prachan.* The existence of a department of music and its system, evidently, changes the relationships between music schools and the *prachan*. It might be said that Thai musicians, after the end of absolute monarchy in 1932, depended very much on the *samnak dontrii* (*สำนักดนตรี*) or music school (teacher's home). They greatly respected their music masters or teachers and were very confident with the musical knowledge and style of their music schools. The striking point is that musicians from different music schools mostly rivaled each other, particularly in the *prachan*, since they normally had their own dignity, were proud of their school's knowledge, and considered themselves better than others. However, the official institutions have given rise to a new systematic approach as those musicians from different music schools now mostly work together in the same institution. This has occurred in parallel with the movement of musicians/disciples transferring from different music schools to a state university and state school. This represents a significant change in Thai music circles. A significant question relating to this change is, how do those musicians, who are from

[59] Suwat Auttagrit, Chaiya Thangmisi, Wiboontam Peeanpong, interview 2013.

different music schools and who have different styles and tastes in music, work together? This was my first question when I interviewed Teeraphong Tongperm, head of the Royal Thai Air Force military band. He said that it was true that his department includes musicians from many different music schools and styles of *piiphaat* music, and there are differing opinions between them about the style of performance.[60] It could be very difficult to work together, since the musicians are from different backgrounds and have their own preferences in terms of music. However, as he is the leader, he stressed strongly, he uses his authority to make decisions about which pieces and in which style his band is going to perform at a specific event. He stressed that he had to use a military rule – the musicians must obey and follow the commander's order - to control all of the musicians so that they cooperate with each other. For instance, in the *prachan* 11th *Piiphaat Seephaa*-tii-Wang Naa 2013, he himself made a decision about the pieces, style and strategy to be used in the competition.

Intriguingly, in other military bands, they also use the same system to enable musicians from different music schools to cooperate with each other. Likewise, in the Fine Arts Department, they also have their own rule that musicians have to follow orders from the head of the department. Thus, a long-term problem i.e. conflict and arguments between musicians from different music schools is straightforwardly solved by military rule or a commanders' order of at the institutions. In my view, this would be a dilemma in Thai music schools in which adversaries become friends in the work place. Significantly, the way that musicians work together in the same institution also leads to the way that they harmonise with each other. With this approach in mind, it could be said that the rule of official institutions breaks the boundaries between musicians and music schools and forges a new form of relationship.

[60] Teeraphong Thongperm, interview, 20/2/12.

The *prachan* 11th *Piiphaat Seephaa*-tii-Wang Naa in my fieldwork provides an interesting view of this aspect. As I mentioned in the previous chapters concerning this *prachan*, it is a significant event that takes place once a year for a performance between six official institutions: four military services, Music Division - Culture, Sports and Tourism Department/Bangkok, and the Fine Arts Department of Thailand. As I mentioned, even though the musicians of each institution always claimed that this event is an annual friendly meeting for musicians, in practice it is a serious competition. In the performance, each ensemble shows their high-skilled level of performance by means of several musical techniques, speed and a strategy in the *prachan* pieces to outdo and defeat each other. I and other musicians at the event, and the audience, considered that it was a serious competition rather than a friendly performance. Admittedly, it was an intense competition due to the involvement of the dignity and fame of those official institutions. They have to show and protect the fame of their institution by giving the best performance that they can. That is why the idea of conceptual fighting and symbolic cultural meaning works very efficiently at this event.

In this regard, I found that this represents a new aspect of *prachan* in Thai music circles. What we can see in this is cooperation between musicians from different music schools for the benefit of their own institution. They work together to compete with others to represent and protect the fame of their own institution. We can see that a new form of *prachan* does not directly depend on the rivalry between musical ensembles from different music schools, but rather it relies on the institutions through the congregation of musicians from different schools. In fact, it is intriguing that each institution includes musicians from different music schools, and apparently some institutions also have musicians from the same schools as others. However, those musicians perform music for their own institutions rather than for their music schools. It seems that the identity of Thai music schools is less important than that of the

institutions. At this event, surprisingly, I did not hear anyone talk about the performance style of the school that the musicians were from; instead they usually talked about the style and performance of the institutions, for example 'The Royal Thai police band played very aggressively, the performance of their *ranaat eek* was formidable,' or 'The performance style of a *khong wong yai* in a solo piece from Music Division - Culture, Sports and Tourism Department/Bangkok was very smooth and beautiful'. Interestingly, even though they knew that those musicians were from famous music schools, at this *prachan*, the musicians and audience did not mention the style or the identity of the music schools of the performing musicians; rather they only referred to the value of an institution. This might denote a change in *prachan* regarding the relationships between musicians, music schools and official institutions at present.

As previously stated, we can see the influence of six official institutions on musicians' relationships in music circles associated with a new form of *prachan*. Likewise, in terms of Thai music education, it can be said that the rise of Thai formal institutions such as state university, schools, and colleges, particularly the department of music in Thai society, has introduced changes in the teacher-pupil relationships (Wong 2001:68). It also relates to the transfer of music teachers and musicians/disciples from different music schools to the formal institutions, particularly the university department of music, arguably resulting in changes in the traditional learning system of Thai music. The institutional system has noticeably changed both the way of transferring musical knowledge between teacher and pupil and also the relationships between teachers or musicians themselves in Thai music circles. Evidently, the aspect of the change in teacher-pupil relationships in musical society relating to the teaching-learning system in the music institution or college system also appears in other music such as Indian classical music (Kippon 2005:109). Through the system of Thai educational institutions, music teachers, students and musicians from different music schools or backgrounds

become more familiar and cooperative. It can be said that nowadays few *samnak dontrii* or Thai music schools still remain in Thai society because of the movement of most music masters and musicians to the institutions.

It seems that official institutions have become more powerful and centralising in music and education than music schools themselves. From this point of view, it can be said that the major patrons or sponsors of Thai music nowadays are indeed institutions (Myers-Moro 1988:192). *Prachan* between music schools at present are less intense or aggressive than in the previous times, as many professional musicians have experienced and heard from their music masters. This is because of the familiarity and close relationships among musicians and music schools in a society that is different from the context and tradition of *prachan* in the past. From this point of view, we can see the change in *prachan* through the power of institutions that have replaced the identity of music schools and the associated conflict. Additionally, as previously stated, we know that the power of an institution gives rise to harmony between musicians and music schools for a performance. It may seem an excellent idea for an institution to harmonise musicians to perform music together by the rule of an institution. However, this can also be considered to be musical homogenisation or a dominant power in music. In terms of another aspect, this method of harmonising musicians' views and styles through institutional control also causes a limitation to musical styles and diversity in Thai music circles. It might be another issue in Thai music circles nowadays, when one musical style is chosen by the institution as the standard form of performance, while others are abandoned as different, or only have a small chance of being performed. This aspect might relate to one of the official institutions in the *prachan* 11th *Piiphaat Seephaa*-tii-Wang Naa. It was declared in public that they planned to arrange a *prachan* competition for the following year to preserve the standard and tradition of *prachan*. It seems that they tried to preserve the image, sounds and format of the *prachan piiphaat*

seephaa from the past as a standard form for the present. I felt quite uneasy when an MC from a famous institution said that the participant ensembles for the next event would be selected from a group of *piiphaat* specialists that they accepted and only the standard ensembles would be selected to compete with each other. Interestingly, it seems that this institution tried to convince people to believe its own explanation of the standard of *prachan* relating to the actual form of traditional music and tried to make it valid as a standardization. The question is, do we actually have a standard in music? If so, how is this word working in Thai musical society?

Changes and Trends in Forms and Formats

The previous chapters introduced *prachan* and the process of conceptual fighting and musical conflict.[61] However, from my fieldwork, I found that there was also a contradiction regarding the form and process of *prachan piiphaat seephaa*. When I interviewed *piiphaat* specialists such as *Khruu* Pinit Chaisuwan (Thai National Artist 2540/1997), *Khruu* Sirichaichan Fokchamroon (Chancellor of the College of Dramatic Arts and Thai National Artist 2557/2014), and *Khruu* Chaiya Thangmesii (Music specialist at the Fine Arts Department of Thailand) and discussed my fieldwork with them, unexpectedly, it seemed that they did not agree that the musical form and format of *prachan* at present was the actual *prachan*. They claimed that 'the form and format of *prachan* in your fieldwork (in 2012-13) is not the same as the standard or usual formal *prachan*'.[62] As mentioned previously in Chapter 2, there was a discussion about the different perspectives in the musical format and the structure of *prachan* in my fieldwork. Arguably, this reminded me of the changes and trends in the musical form and format of *prachan* at present.

[61] See Chapter 3 for the distinction between 'conceptual fighting' and 'musical conflict'.
[62] Pinit Chaisuwan, Sirichaicharn Fachamroon, and Chaiya Thangmisi, interview, 2013.

As for Nettl's term 'musical impoverishment', it refers to the way that music has changed and the reduction in the components of traditional music due to the impact of western music and culture (Nettl 2005:438). This concept relates to the notion of protecting old musical tradition from the influence of western music with reduced 'energy' (as musical creativity), or the reduction in the number of people, styles, instruments and musical pieces, as well as in the length of performances and so forth (Nettl 2005:437). His notion prompted me to realise the possibility of the contraction of the *prachan* format from the standard one in modern society. By considering the contracted format of *prachan piiphaat seephaa*, Pamela Myers-Moro, in 'Thai music and musicians in contemporary Bangkok' (1993), stresses that at present the traditional form of the *prachan* format is often contracted, and only three musical pieces remain in *hoomroong*, *diaw*, and *phleeng laa* repertoires. This is because musicians want to use this framework to increase the value of *diaw* or solo performing in competition (Myers-Moro 1993:62). My work will build on her idea in regards to this aspect. I would contradict her in terms of this idea, since, in practice, there are a variety of contracted forms and formats of *prachan* that differ from the standard one. In this section, I will illustrate and compare the contraction of *prachan* forms and formats, and then explore the trends in contemporary *prachan*. It is necessary to understand the variety of musical formats and trends in *prachan* from different perspectives to perceive the ideas and influences that have caused it to change. This might reveal the concept of the movement in Thai musical society, and the idea of *prachan* at present.

Standard and Contracted Form of *Prachan*

The traditional *prachan piiphaat seephaa* format and process is evidently grounded in the form and structure of the *seephaa* repertoire, which is called *phleeng* (*prapeet*) *seephaa* (*เพลงเสภา หรือ เพลงประเภทเสภา*). Arguably, in the reign of King Rama IV (1851-1868),

four main *seephaa* pieces at *saam chan* metrical level were said to have been created by great music masters in the palace to enhance the level of difficulty of the *prachan* performance and this was viewed as the fundamental form for the performance of a *piiphaat seephaa* ensemble comprising *Phma Haathon* (*พม่าห้าท่อน*), *Cholakae Haangyaao* (*จรเข้หางยาว*), *Siibot* (*สี่บท*), and *Bulan* (*บุหลัน*). However, the musical format of *piiphaat seephaa* with singing was then formed and developed by musicians, with the support of the royal family, to increase the tension of *prachan* competitions. This format of *prachan* is widely known among *prachan* musicians as an original or standard form of *prachan*.

Obvious evidence of this form of *prachan* mostly refers to one of the most significant *prachans* in the reign of King Rama VI (1910-1925) called '*ngaan sii maseng*' (*งานสี่มะเส็ง*) in 1923 at Baang Khunphrom palace (Princess Siriratbusabong and Amatayakul 2524/1981:47-49) (see Chapter 1). This was an intense *prachan piiphaa seephaa* organised by the royal palace to celebrate the co-birthday celebrations of the four princes: Prince Boripatra, Prince Burachat Chaiyakara, Prince Pisamaipimolsat, and Prince Sasipongprapai, who were King Chulalongkorn's children (ibid:49-52). It was a *prachan* between three palace ensembles: the Baang Khunphrom, the Burapapirom, and the *Cao Phraya* Dhamaadhikaranaadhibadii. The format of *prachan* at that event was as follows:

- *Hoomroong* (*hoomroong seephaa*) – overture (choice of the musicians of each ensemble)
- *Phma Haathon*
- *Cholakae Haangyaao, Siibot, Bulan*
- *Diaw* (solo) *Khaek Mon*
- *Tayoe Nauk*
- *Diaw Kraao Nai*

- *Phleeng Laa* - farewell: *Tao Kin Pugboong, Nok Khamin, Phra-Atit Ching Duang*[63]

The significant feature of this format is that after playing the *hoomroong* (overture) piece, every ensemble competed with the others by performing the same musical pieces alternately in a set order. This *prachan* format is very challenging and serious, since using the same piece of music means listeners can explicitly identify the differences in performance between the ensembles. In this *prachan* format, the result of a competition is obvious to the audience. Hence, musicians have to perform perfectly and better than their rivals in order to protect the fame of their prince and music master/ music school and their dignity as professional musicians.

In this *prachan* format, as mentioned above, we can see that the musicians at that event performed a *hoomroong* or *hoomroong seephaa* (*โหมโรงเสภา*) piece, which they could choose from the *hoomroong or hoomroong seephaa* repertoire. Then, the four main *seephaa* pieces were applied, starting with *Phma Haathon, Cholakae Haangyaao, Siibot, Bulan.* Next, they performed *Diaw Khaek Mon* (*เดี่ยวแขกมอญ*) (*saam chan*), which is one of the main solo pieces in the *phleeng diaw* (*เพลงเดี่ยว*) or *diaw* (solo) repertoire. Then, they performed *Tayoe Nauk* (*ทยอยนอก*), a main piece in the *phleeng tayoe* (*เพลงทยอย*) or *tayoe* repertoire, followed by the *Diaw Kraao Nai* (*เดี่ยวกราวใน*), a main solo piece in the *diaw* repertoire. Ultimately, they performed three *phleeng laa* (*เพลงลา*) pieces (farewell pieces) in the *phleeng laa* repertoire: *Tao Kin Pugboong* (*เต่ากินผักบุ้ง*), *Nok Khamin* (*นกขมิ้น*), and *Phra Athit Ching Duang* (*พระอาทิตย์ชิงดวง*) to signify the end of their performance. By considering the type of repertoire and the different levels of *prachan* pieces used in this competition, it can be said that the format of this *prachan* increased the level of difficulty and complexity of the performance in each part of the

[63] Princess Siriratbusabong and Amatayakul 2524/1981:49 and *Anusorn Nai Ngaan Phraratchatan-phloengsaup Naai Teap Konglaaithong* [Memorial Thai musician royal cremation event: Teap Konglaaithong] 2525/1982:39-46

competition. Significantly, after the main *seephaa* pieces, this form also includes the *Tayoe Nauk* and *Kraao Nai*, which are significant pieces in the *tayoe* repertoire and of the highest level and status in Thai solo musical performance. Both pieces, admittedly, require highly skilled and intelligent musicians to perform them. Arguably, the royal family intended to use this format in competition to find an actual winner as well as to test the musicians' and music teachers' competence and intelligence. As this *prachan* format, arranged by the royal family, was performed by famous musicians/music masters from different palaces, most musicians at present accept this format as the standard form of *prachan piiphaat seephaa.* They consider that the standard format of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* should be mainly composed of *Rao Pralong Seephaa* (*รัวประลองเสภา*) and *Hoomroong, Phma Haathon* (*พม่าห้าท่อน*), *Cholakae Haangyaao* (*จรเข้หางยาว*), *Siibot* (*สี่บท*), *Bulan* (*บุหลัน*), *tayoe* (*ทยอย*), *diaw* (*เดี่ยว*) and *phleeng laa* (*เพลงลา*). These pieces are categorised as the pieces from five main repertoires in *prachan piiphaat seephaa* comprising '*hoomroong* (overture), four main *seephaa*, *tayoe*, *diaw* (solo), and *phleeng laa* (farewell)'.[64] The standard format of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* is as follows:

- *Hoomroong* - overture (choice of the musicians)
- *Phma Haathon, Cholakae Haangyaao, Siibot, Bulan*
- *Tayoe** (choice of the musicians for main *tayoe* pieces from the *tayoe* repertoire)
- *Diaw** - solo (choice of the musicians for main solo pieces, at *saam chan* metrical level, from the *diaw* repertoire)
- *Phleeng Laa* - farewell (choice of the musicians for the three main farewell pieces from the *phleeng laa* repertoire)

* Unlimited number of pieces in performance

[64] Pinit Chaisuwan, Chaiya Thangmisi, Somchai Tubporn, interview, March 2013

As mentioned above, this *prachan* format is accepted among musicians as the standard form. However, the question is, can this format still be applied to contemporary *prachan piiphaat seephaa*? If not, how and why was it changed? What are the influences on the modification or adaptation of the *prachan* format? In order to clarify these questions, in this section I would like to illustrate the formats and processes of *prachan* events in my fieldwork and other significant *prachans* to compare them with the standard format of *prachan* in musicians' ideology. From my fieldwork at eight *prachan* competitions, four significant *prachans* have been chosen as present-day examples (see Chapter 2) to compare with the standard format of *prachan*. The four main *prachan* events in my fieldwork in 2012-13 comprise *Prachan* Wat Phra Phireen, *Prachan* Wat Sriprawat, *Prachan* Ngaan Loy Krathong Ratchaburi 2012, as well as *Prachan* '11th *Piiphaat-Saepa*-tii-Wang Naa'. The formats of these four *prachans* are as follows:

Prachan Wat Phra Phireen

- *Probkai*
- *Tayoe*
- *Diaw* - solo

Prachan Wat Sriprawat

- *Probkai*
- *Tayoe*

Prachan Ngaan Loy Krathong Ratchaburi 2012

- *Hoomroong* - overture
- *Probkai*
- *Tayoe*

Prachan '11th *Piiphaat-Saepa*-tii-Wang Naa'

- *Hoomroong* – overture (*Hoomroong Aiyareet*)
- *Tayoe* (choice of the musicians)
- *Choet Ciin*
- *Diaw* – solo (*Khaek Mon*)
- *Phleeng Laa* – farewell (*Phra-Athit Ching Duang*)

From the four *prachan* events in my fieldwork, we can see that the *prachan* formats are varied, comprising assorted repertoire styles such as *probkai* (ปรบไก่), *tayoe* (ทยอย), *diaw* (เดี่ยว) (solo), and *phleeng laa* (เพลงลา) (farewell). Significantly, they vary and differ from the musicians' ideal standard format of *prachan*. The figure below shows the comparison between the *prachan* standard format and the *prachan* formats from the four *prachan* events comprising *Prachan* Wat Phra Phireen, *Prachan* Wat Sriprawat, *Prachan* Ngaan Loy Krathong Ratchaburi, and *Prachan* 11th *Piiphaat Seephaa*-tii-Wang Naa.

Figure 5.1: Comparison between the *prachan* standard format (1923) and the examples of *prachan* formats from four *prachan* events in Bangkok and rural areas in 2012- 2013

***Prachan* Standard Format**	**Wat Phra Phireen (1)**	**Wat Sriprawat (2)**	**Ngaan Loy Krathong (3)**	**11th *Piiphaat Seephaa*-tii Wang Naa (4)**
Hoomroong (overture repertoire)			*Hoomroong* (overture repertoire)	*Hoomroong* (*Hoomroong Aiyareet*, overture repertoire)
Phma Haathon CholakaeHaangyaao Siibot Bulan	*Probkai* (*probkai* repertoire)	*Probkai* (*probkai* repertoire)	*Probkai* (*probkai* repertoire)	*Tayoe* (*tayoe* repertoire)
Tayoe (*tayoe* repertoire)	*Tayoe* (*tayoe* repertoire)	*Tayoe* (*tayoe* repertoire)	*Tayoe* (*tayoe* repertoire)	*Choet Ciin*
Diaw (solo repertoire)	*Diaw* (solo repertoire)			*Diaw* (*Khaek Mon*) (one of the main pieces in solo repertoire)
Phleeng Laa (farewell repertoire)				*Phleeng Laa* (*Phra-Athit Ching- Duang*) (one of the main pieces in farewell repertoire)

The figure above reveals the changes from the *prachan* (*piiphaat seephaa*) standard format at different *prachan* events in my fieldwork in 2012-2013. Even though the format of these four *prachans* is varied, there are some similarities and differences that could explain the phenomenon of the *prachan* format at present. By and large, we can see that all four *prachans* in my fieldwork, numbered (1) to (4), include the *tayoe* repertoire in the *prachan* format. *Prachan* numbers (1), (2) and (3) have a similar format, focusing mainly on both the *probkai* and *tayoe* repertoires. *Prachan* numbers (3) and (4) take the *hoomroong* (overture) repertoire into account, whereas numbers (1) and (4) include *diaw* or a solo repertoire in the competition. *Prachan* number (4) is the only

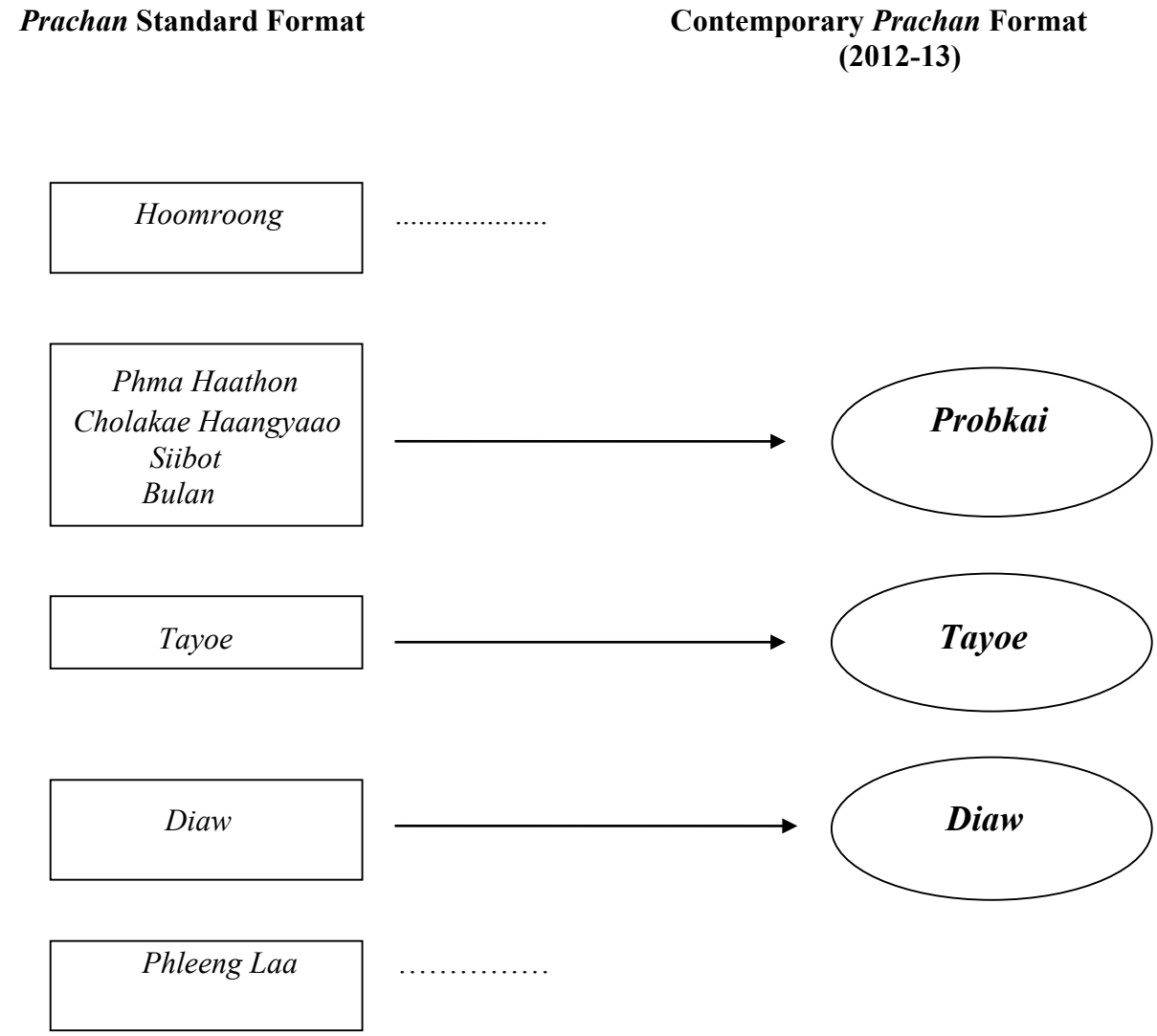
prachan from the four events to include *phleeng laa* or a farewell repertoire in the *prachan* format. Comparing the four *prachan* formats with the standard form of *prachan*, there is arguably no match. However, we might consider the *prachan* 11th *Piiphaat Seephaa*-tii-Wang Naa (4)[65] as the closest equivalent to the standard. This is because it also includes the musical pieces in *hoomroong, tayoe, diaw and phleeng laa* repertoires, which is almost the same format as the standard form in sequence, regardless of the absence of the four main *seephaa* pieces (*Phma Haathon*, *Cholakae Haangyaao, Siibot, Bulan*). Furthermore, we might consider that all of the *prachan* formats in the figure share the same idea of including the *tayoe* repertoire in the competition. Additionally, the standard format and *prachan* numbers (1) and (4) also include the *diaw* or solo repertoire.

As for the *prachan* format, we can see that none of the four *prachan* events includes the structure of the four main *seephaa* pieces (*Phma Haathon*, *Cholakae Haangyaao, Siibot, Bulan*) as in the standard format of *prachan piiphaat seephaa*. From *prachan* formats (1), (2) and (3), it might be said that at the *prachan*, instead of performing the four main *seephaa* pieces, the musicians chose to perform a piece from the *probkai* repertoire to compete with each other. After performing a piece from the *probkai* repertoire, in the *prachan* formats (1), (2) and (3), the musicians then performed a musical piece from the *tayoe* repertoire. *Prachan* Wat Sriprawat (2) and Loykrathong (3) end the competition with a *tayoe* piece, whereas *prachan* Wat Phra Phireen (1) and *prachan* 11th *Piiphaat Seephaa*-tii-Wang Naa (4) finish the performance with a *diaw* (solo) piece and *phleeng laa* (farewell) piece respectively. Interestingly, in *prachan* formats (1), (2) and (3), no-one performs a piece from the *phleeng laa* repertoire, which is a piece that traditionally signifies the end of the competition.

[65] *Prachan* 11th *Piiphaat Seephaa*-tii-Wang Naa event aimed to preserve the standard of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* as well as establish social relationships between musicians among Thai official institutions.

With this approach in mind, beyond the four *prachan* formats in my examples, I also found a similarity in terms of this aspect in other *prachans* in my fieldwork. I found that musicians mainly chose a musical piece from the *probkai* repertoire to perform at *prachan*, instead of playing the four main *seephaa* pieces. Significantly, when I participated in *prachan* in other places in my fieldwork, such as *prachan* Wat Chenghwaay (Bangkok), *prachan* Wat Mahathaat (Rachaburi province), *prachan* Rong-reean Baanhmii (Lopburi province), and so forth, I found that the form of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* was chiefly in either format: the *probkai* and *tayoe* repertoires or the *probkai, tayoe,* and *diaw* repertoires. Surprisingly, most *prachan* ensembles in my fieldwork did not even perform a *hoomroong* (overture) piece, the four main *seephaa* pieces or *phleeng laa* piece, which are specifically the compulsory musical pieces in the standard format of *prachan piiphaat seephaa*. It might be said that nowadays it is quite rare to find a *prachan* event that has the full standard *prachan* format. By and large, it could be said that the contemporary *prachan* format fundamentally focuses on the pieces in the *probkai*, *tayoe* and *diaw* repertoires. Following this aspect, the form of *prachan* at present might be considered a contraction of the musical format from the standard, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 5.2: Contraction of the *prachan* format from the standard (1923) to the contemporary format (2012-13)



As in the figure above, we can see that the contemporary format of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* is a contraction of the format that musicians regard as standard. This format, from musicians' perspective, retains only the main pieces that represent the proficiency and intelligence of musicians in the competition. However, this format still keeps the tradition of *prachan*, which is a way of enhancing the level of difficulty of the musical pieces in each part or repertoire of *prachan*. As *Khruu* Chaiya Thangmisi, a *piiphaat* specialist at the Fine Arts Department of Bangkok, pointed out that, 'the

prachan format at present still retains the traditional form of enhancing the intensity of musical pieces in each part in the form of *probkai*, *tayoe* and *diaw*'.[66] In the competition, musicians start with the *probkai* repertoire and then perform a musical piece from the *tayoe* repertoire, which is considered to represent the complex techniques, strength and intelligence of musicians. The *diaw* or solo repertoire, finally, is considered to be the ending piece for the *prachan*, since it is regarded as the most significant performance showing the musical proficiency of a solo musician through techniques, sounds, memorisation and high concentration in the competition. The significance of the *probkai*, *tayoe* and *diaw* repertoires also relate to the trends in contemporary *prachan* which will be discussed in the next section.

In terms of the contracted form of *prachan*, one significant example of this was a famous *prachan* event '*ngaan prachan piiphaat naa phratiinang*' (*งานประชันปี่พาทย์หน้าพระที่นั่ง*) (*prachan piiphaat* competition in front of the throne event) in 1985. This was a *prachan piiphaat seephaa* presented to Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, known as princess Sirindhorn, at Mahidol University, Bangkok Thailand. This *prachan* was arranged because *prachan* competitions dedicated to the Thai king and dynasty had not taken place for forty-five years following the Thai revolution and the end of absolute monarchy in Thailand in 1932.[67] Hence, this event was arranged to conserve the tradition of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* performing in front of the royal family (Amatayakul 2528/1985:4-5). It is regarded as one of the great *prachans*, since it was an intense *prachan* between the Baan Baangkapi (Baangkapi house) and the Baan Baang-lampu (Baang-lampu house), the two famous *prachan* ensembles in that period. Those ensembles were led by Pinit Chaisuwan (Thai National Artist 2540/1997) and Somchay Duriyapraneet, the two great *piiphaat* music masters from the Social Welfare

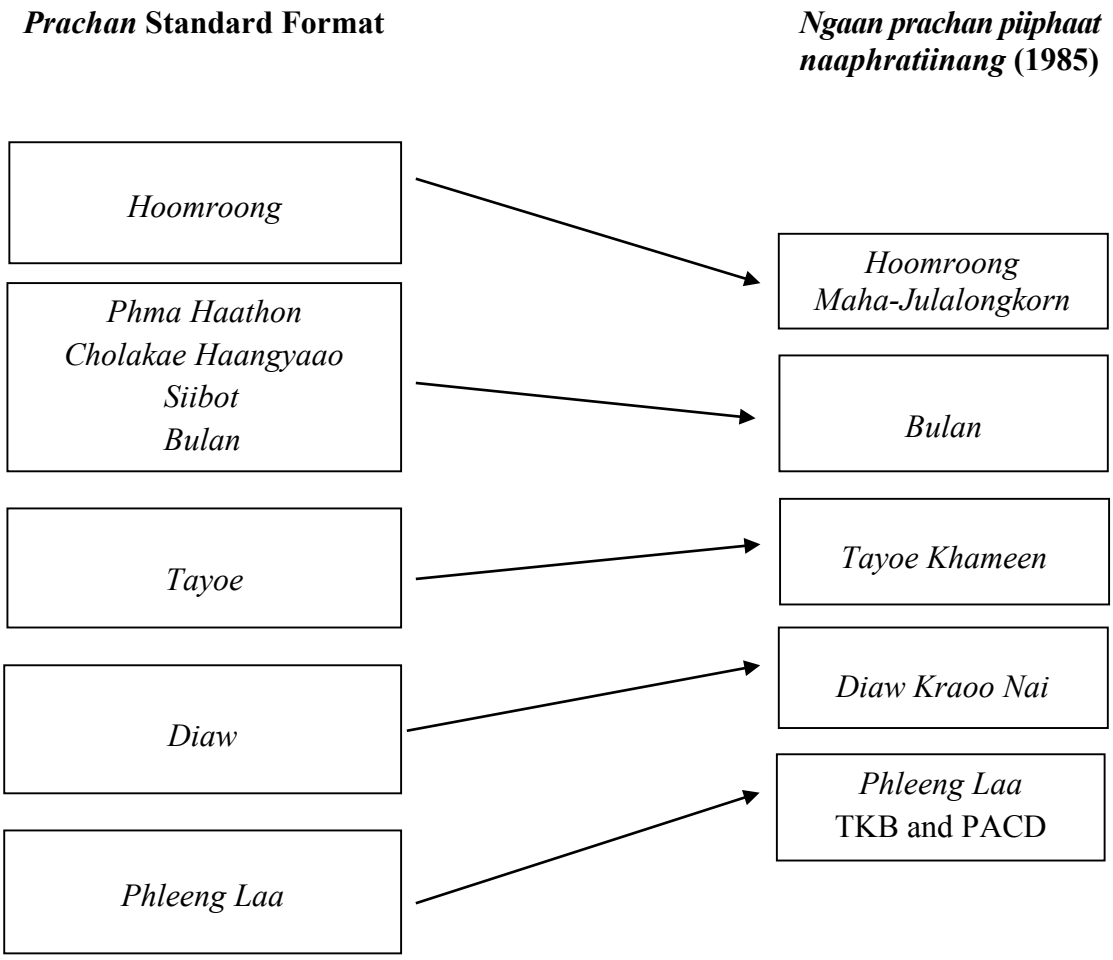
[66] Chaiya Thangmisi, interview, Fine Arts Department of Thailand, August 2013.
[67] The last *prachan* before the end of Thai absolute monarchy was at Laddawan palace. It was arranged by His Royal Highness Krommaluang Lopburi Ramet in 2473/1930.

Department of Bangkok and Duriya Praneet music school. The format of *prachan* at this event consisted of five parts comprising *Hoomroong Maha-Julalongkorn* (โหมโรงมหาจุฬาลงกรณ์), *Bulan* (one of the four main *seephaa* pieces), *Tayoe Khameen* (*thao*) (one of the main pieces of the *tayoe* repertoire), *Diaw Kraao Nai* (*saam chan*) (one of the five main solo pieces), and *Phleeng Laa*: *Tao Kin Pagboong* (เต่ากินผักบุ้ง) *and Phra Athit Ching Duang* pieces.[68] This *prachan* was an intense competition, since both were famous ensembles competing with each other and mostly performing the same pieces from each repertoire (except the *phleeng laa* repertoire). The format of this *prachan* can be divided into five parts as follows:

- *Hoomroong* – overture (*Hoomroong Maha-Julalongkorn*)
- *Bulan* (one of the four main *seephaa* pieces)
- *Tayoe* (*Tayoe Khameen* - one of the main pieces of *tayoe* repertoire)
- *Diaw* - solo (*Diaw Kraao Nai*- one of the five main solo pieces of *diaw* repertoire)
- *Phleeng Laa* - farewell (*Phleeng Laa Tao Kin Pagboong* (TKB) and *Phra Athit Ching Duang* (PACD) from the *phleeng laa* repertoire)

[68] Amatayakul 2528/1985:14-17

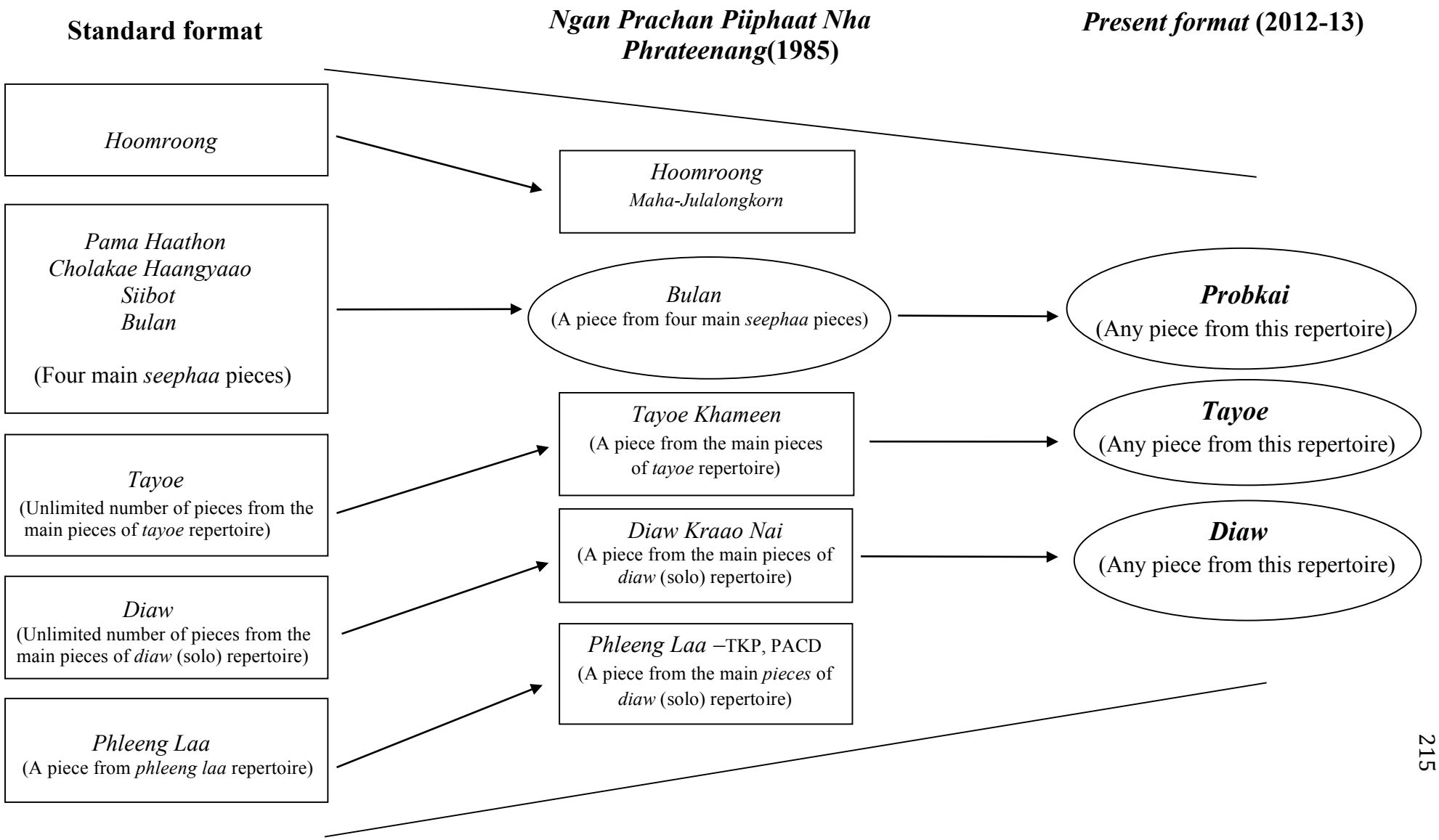
Figure 5.3: Contracted form of the *prachan* format of *ngaan prachan piiphaat naa phratiinang* (*prachan piiphaat* competition in front of the throne event) in 1985 from the standard format (1923)



From the above figure, we can get a general idea of the *prachan piiphaat seephaa* format. It illustrates the contraction of the *prachan* format, particularly the contraction from the four main *seephaa* pieces of the standard format to the *Bulan* piece alone. From this example, we can see the change in the *prachan* format in 1985 from the standard one, which, by and large, still retained the standard concept and form of *prachan*, but restricted the number of main *seephaa* pieces in the performance. Focusing on the change in the *prachan* format, significantly, the comparison of *prachan* formats between the standard one, *ngaan prachan piiphaat naa phratiinang* (1985), and

the contemporary (2012-13) ones from my fieldwork will help place in context the contracted form and movement of the *prachan* format at present. The figure below illustrates the contraction of the *prachan* format from the standard, *ngaan prachan piiphaat naa phratiinang* to the contemporary one.

Figure 5.4: The contraction of the *prachan* format



From the figure above, we can get a general idea of the change in the *prachan* format from the standard one to that found in my fieldwork, conducted in 2012-13. By and large, there has been a contraction in the number of musical pieces in *prachan piiphaa seephaa* from eight to three (from the standard to the contemporary format). This also implies a shorter performance. As mentioned previously, contemporary *prachan* focuses on three main repertoires (*probkai*, *tayoe* and *diaw*); however, on some occasions, *hoomroong* (overture) and *phleeng laa* (farewell) pieces might also be performed, as in the traditional format. The striking feature of this figure is that we can see the dramatic change from the standard format with four main compulsory pieces from *seephaa* repertoire (*Phma Haathon, Cholakae Haangyaao, Siibot, Bulan*) to only the one piece (*Bulan*) in *ngaan prachan piiphaat naa phratiinang*, and then the change to only one piece from the *probkai* repertoire in *prachan* at present. This can be considered to be the contracted form of *prachan* from four main *seephaa* pieces to only one piece from the *probkai* repertoire. Additionally, from the figure, even though the *tayoe* and *diaw* repertoires still exist in the contemporary *prachan* (2012-13) format and at the *ngaan prachan piiphaat naa phratiinang* event (1985), similar to the standard format, they are still considered to be a contracted form. This is because in the standard format the *tayoe* and *diaw* pieces (from the *tayoe* and *diaw* repertoires) are traditionally considered to contain an unlimited number of pieces, but the formats of contemporary *prachan* (2012-13) and the *ngaan prachan piiphaat naa phratiinang* (1985) only include one piece from each repertoire. This also relates to the trends in contemporary *prachan*, the variety of *prachan* pieces and the limit to the number of pieces from each repertoire at the performances, which will be discussed in detail in the next section. Significantly, this can be explained in terms of both the contraction of the *prachan* format and the change in the *prachan* concept at present.

By considering the contracted format of *prachan piiphaat seephaa*, this also relates to what I argued with regard to Myers-Moro (1993) earlier in this chapter, in terms of her idea of the contracted form. She stresses the traditional form of the *seephaa mahorii* repertoire (*seephaa* category), which traditionally comprises *hoomroong* (choice of musicians), *Phma Haathon, Chorakae Haangyaao, Siibot, Bulan*, and any songs from the *seephaa* repertoire including *phleeng diaw* (only on significant occasions) and ends with *phleeng laa* or a farewell piece (1993:61-62). From her work, it seems that in general the traditional form of the *seephaa* repertoire mainly focuses on five fundamental pieces, which are *hoomroong* and four main *seephaa* pieces, while the rest can be pieces from the *seephaa* (including *probkai*, *tayoe* categories) and *diaw* repertoires. An unlimited number of pieces can be performed before ending with *phleeng laa*. Nonetheless, she also mentions that the traditional form of (*prachan*) *seephaa* performance is often truncated, retaining only three pieces from the *hoomroong*, *diaw*, and *phleeng laa* repertoires (ibid.:62). She stresses that this is because musicians use this framework to increase the value of solo playing in competition (ibid.:62). In this respect, I would disagree with her idea. It is true to say that the *prachan seephaa* format at present is often contracted from the traditional or standard format. However, the contraction occurs not only into three pieces or one specific format, as she mentions. In practice, there are a variety of contracted forms and formats of *prachan.*

From my observations, when I participated in *prachans* and interviewed musicians concerning the *prachan* pieces and their experience, it appeared that in practice there were a variety of formats at different *prachan* events. For example, at some *prachan* events, each ensemble performed only one piece from the *probkai* repertoire, whereas at the *prachan* at Wat Sriprawat, the musicians competed with each other playing pieces from both the *probkai* and *tayoe* repertoires. Arguably, the variety of contracted formats of *prachan* depends on the hosts and purposes of each competition as well as other

factors. It seems that there are several reasons for contracting the *prachan* format from the standard one. For instance, at some *prachan* events, the host does not require the performance of *Rao Pralong Seephaa* or *hoomroong* because it is time-consuming. They may prefer to save time for performances of the main pieces from the *probkai* or *tayoe* repertoires. A host might ask or invite a famous ensemble to perform a *Rao Pralong Seephaa* and *hoomroong* piece as an opening piece for a *prachan* competition. Hence, other ensembles at a *prachan* event can compete with each other regardless of *hoomroong* or the overture repertoire.

Some musicians think that the main *seephaa* pieces can be considered the pieces that are associated with the *probkai* repertoire, so they replace them with pieces that have mostly *Khunchaang Khunphaen* lyrics, from the *probkai* repertoire. As the *diaw* or solo piece is a significant challenge, sometimes performance are denied to avoid conflict between musicians both during the *prachan* and afterwards. However, at an intense *prachan* competition, musicians still consider *diaw* a significant piece. Additionally, sometimes a host does not want to have a *phleeng laa* (or *phleeng laa* repertoire) or farewell piece at the competition, since he knows that after the *tayoe* and *diaw* pieces, it will already be the small hours of the morning. Hence, the performance has to end by a particular time, due to an awareness of annoying the neighbours living near to the temple, or the public place in which *prachan* is being held.

As mentioned above, it could be said that there are several factors that influence the change to or contraction of the form and format of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* at present. Arguably, this mainly depends upon the hosts and the purposes of the competition in relation to the *prachan* context. In Thai music culture, the reason why people host *prachan* is because *prachan* music signifies their wealth and dignity in Thai society. As mentioned in Chapter 1, traditionally, *prachan piiphaat seepha* was held in high esteem among the Thai dynasty and noblemen, as a high-class fashion. They

usually hosted *prachan* at several different events to demonstrate their wealth and status. This ideology still functions in Thai music circles at present. It might be said that the host has a significant influence on the *prachan* structure and performance, as he is the one who imposes the rules, aims, and conditions of the *prachan* between the music ensembles at an event. Nevertheless, even though it seems that the contemporary *prachan* format is contracted and quite varied depending on the hosts and the *prachan*'s purposes, musicians still share the same idea in terms of some aspects relating to the *seephaa* form. Largely, they share a rough idea of the *prachan* format in their performance in the form of *probkai*, *tayoe*, and *diaw*. They do this in order to keep the traditional form and to enhance the intensity of the musical pieces at each level of the repertoire, in accordance with the fundamental concept of *prachan*. This is a contracted format and not the ideal or standard format of *prachan* as in 1923 in musicians' ideology. In this regard, it might be said that the standard format of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* does not apply all the time in competitions.

Modification and Trends in the New Age of *Prachan*

Apart from the contracted form of *prachan*, the process and performance of *prachan* are also significant in considering the development of *prachan* at present. When I first ascertained the concept and form of *prachan piipaat seephaa* in my fieldwork, I was quite surprised that the present form and process of *prachan* was somewhat different from musicians' ideal notions of the traditional form. *Khruu* Sirichaicharn Fachamroon, the chancellor of the College of Dramatic Arts and National Artist of Thailand (Thai music) 2014, pointed out, 'the significant feature of *prachan piiphaat seephaa*, apparently, was the form of the competition by using the same piece'.[69] In other words, it was a form of competition in which musical ensembles fundamentally competed with

[69] Sirichaicharn Fachamroon, interview, the College of Dramatic Art, Bangkok, 8/5/2013.

each other by playing their own versions of the same piece from each repertoire to find an actual winner. This is apparently an intense competition that musicians consider to be the real or standard *prachan*.

The form of this *prachan piiphaat seephaa* is evident from *prachan* history in 1923 '*ngaan sii maseng*' in the reign of King Rama VI (1881-1925) (Princess Siriratbusabong and Amatayakul 2524/1981:49-52), as mentioned previously, and also from the 1930 *prachan* at Ladawan palace, the forty-eighth birthday celebration of HRH Prince Yugaka Dughambara, Prince of Lopburi, in the reign of King Rama VII (1925-1935) two years before the end of absolute monarchy (ibid:52, Phoasavadi 2005:91). Both events were arranged by the royal family. These events were intense *prachans*, as each ensemble was patronised by the royal family. Hence, the musicians had to protect the dignity of their lords by winning the competition. Historically, the main idea of *prachan* at those events was that every ensemble had to play the same musical pieces alternatively in a set of order in order to show the variations in music. Given that musicians from different ensembles had to perform the same piece, music masters/teachers had to show their musical creativity by finding a way to show that they were different and better than the others through a new musical arrangement at the *prachan*. From this aspect, we can see that the past form of *prachan* was a form of competition using the same pieces in order to show different variations in music. It can be considered a competition that enabled challenging and exchanging musical ideas by means of musical arrangements.

Comparing this with *prachan* at present, from my fieldwork, it appears that the way that musicians compete with each other in *prachan piiphaat seephaa* is somewhat different from the traditional form. Significantly, they compete with each other in the form of musical response using different pieces. This concept also correlates with the famous historical *prachan* event; *prachan* 'Sua Singh Krathing Raet' (*เสือ สิงห์ กระทิง แรด*) at

the Thai National Theatre in 1980 (between four famous ensembles; Suphot Tosa-nga, Suradeet Kimpiiam, Phat buathang, and Meethaa Hmuuyen ensembles)[70] (Amatayakul et al. 2550/2007:726). This event is considered to be the prestigious and legendary *prachan* from the end of the twentieth century. Evidently, this *prachan* event, by and large, aimed to get the musicians to respond to and challenge each other in different pieces, particularly in the *hoomroong* and *probkai* or *tayoe* (*thao* form) repertoires, rather than using the same piece as in the original approach. Significantly, the traditional concept of performing *prachan* with the same pieces has nowadays become less popular and is perceived in terms of '*tii tub phleeng*' (ตีทับเพลง) (overlapping pieces). This way of performing music, i.e. musicians performing the same piece each other, is, by and large, considered among Thai music circles as an impudent act or inappropriate manner and behaviour for musicians. This is because in Thai musicians' perception playing the same piece illustrates an obvious intention to rival one another and strongly signifies posing a challenge or provoking a conflict at the *prachan*. In contrast, *prachan* competitions using different pieces have generally become a way of showing, and challenging, each other in terms of musical knowledge in an appropriate way in Thai music circles. Hence, the trend in contemporary *prachan* is, by and large, a form of musical response representing musical ideas in different pieces.

Apart from the change in the *prachan* concept, one of the significant aspects of *prachan* at present is the expansion of choices for *prachan* pieces from each repertoire in competitions. This should be taken into account in terms of the development of *prachan*. As state previously, the contemporary contracted *prachan* format is mostly in the form of the *probkai*, *tayoe* and *diaw* repertoires. However, this can also be seen as the development of *prachan* through musical pieces. Nowadays, the musical pieces

[70] Sua Singh Krathing Raet was part of the 11th Dontrii Thai Phannana programme on 18 October 1980 at the Thai National Theatre, Bangkok. The *prachan* format can be separated into four parts from four repertoires including *hoomroong*, *probkai* or *tayoe* (*thao* form), *diaw* and *phleeng laa.*

from the three main repertoires used in *prachan* are quite varied, and musicians expand these in a variety of competitions to include different pieces, both traditional pieces and new compositions. Following this point, it can be said that nowadays *prachan* musicians try to vary the pieces rather than focusing only on the main pieces in the standard form of the competition. For instance, in my fieldwork, *prachan* musicians preferred to performing a piece from the *probkai* repertoire such as *Phma Hea* (*พม่าเห่*), *Bulan, Siibot, Phan Farang* (*พันธุ์ฝรั่ง*), *Champanari* (*จำปานารี*), *Teph Runjuan* (*เทพรัญจวน*), *Sroyphrasore* (*สร้อยพระศอ*), and *Don Jedii* (*ดอนเจดีย์*) rather than the four main *seephaa* pieces. This is because this repertoire is relatively broad so they can use several pieces to get involved in the competition. Most importantly, most *prachan* musicians considered that the main *seephaa* pieces are also associated with the *probkai* repertoire, since three of the four main *seephaa* pieces (*Cholakae Haangyaao*, *Siibot*, *Bulan*) are accompanied by the *probkai* rhythmic pattern. Therefore, they consider *probkai* repertoire to be as important as the four main *seephaa* pieces. This trend also correlates with an argument made by some music masters and adept musicians at present, who usually mention the *probkai* repertoire rather than the four main *seephaa* pieces in the *prachan* format. They also raise the point of the standard *prachan*, which can also be considered to be the form of *hoomroong*, *probkai*, *tayoe*, *diaw* and *phleeng laa*. This is because they place value on the *probkai* repertoire in the competition.

Likewise, in the *tayoe* repertoire, traditionally, *prachan* musicians chose to perform pieces from the six main *tayoe* pieces comprising '*Tayoe Nauk*, *Tayoe Nai*, *Tayoe Khameen* (*ทยอยเขมร*), *Khaek Oat* (*แขกโอด*), *Khaek Lopburii* (*แขกลพบุรี*), and *Khameen Raat* (*เขมรราช*)', according to the standard form.[71] However, nowadays they choose only one piece from this repertoire, but expand their choices beyond the main *tayoe* pieces in different dialects and styles. Therefore, the *tayoe* pieces used in *prachan* at present are

[71] Pinit Chaisuwan and Somran Kerdpon, Thai National Artists 2540/1997 and 2548/2005, interview 2013.

quite varied, and include *Khaek Lopburii Thaang Baangkhaulaem* (แขกลพบุรีทางบางคอแหลม), *Tayoe Nauk*, *Tayoe Khameen*, *Tayoe Yuan* (ทยอยญวณ), *Tavoy* (ทวอย), *Oh Lao* (โอ้ลาว), *Talay Baa* (ทะเลบ้า), *Vilanda Oat* (วิลันดาโอด) and so forth. This is because these pieces are also accompanied by the *tayoe* or *saung maai* (สองไม้) rhythmic patterns, which still fit into the framework of the *tayoe* repertoire,[72] and also represent differing styles and foreign dialects such as *khaek* (แขก) (Indian), *yuan* (ญวณ) (Vietnamese), *lao* (ลาว) (Lao) and *farang* (ฝรั่ง) (Western) in *prachan* music. The reason why musicians have expanded their choices beyond the main *tayoe* pieces is because it is very challenging to perform *tayoe* pieces in the variety of different dialects and styles to enhance the *prachan* competition so that it is more intense and entertaining. This also relates to the trend of applying foreign dialects in the *haang phleeng* piece in contemporary *prachan,* which will be explained later.

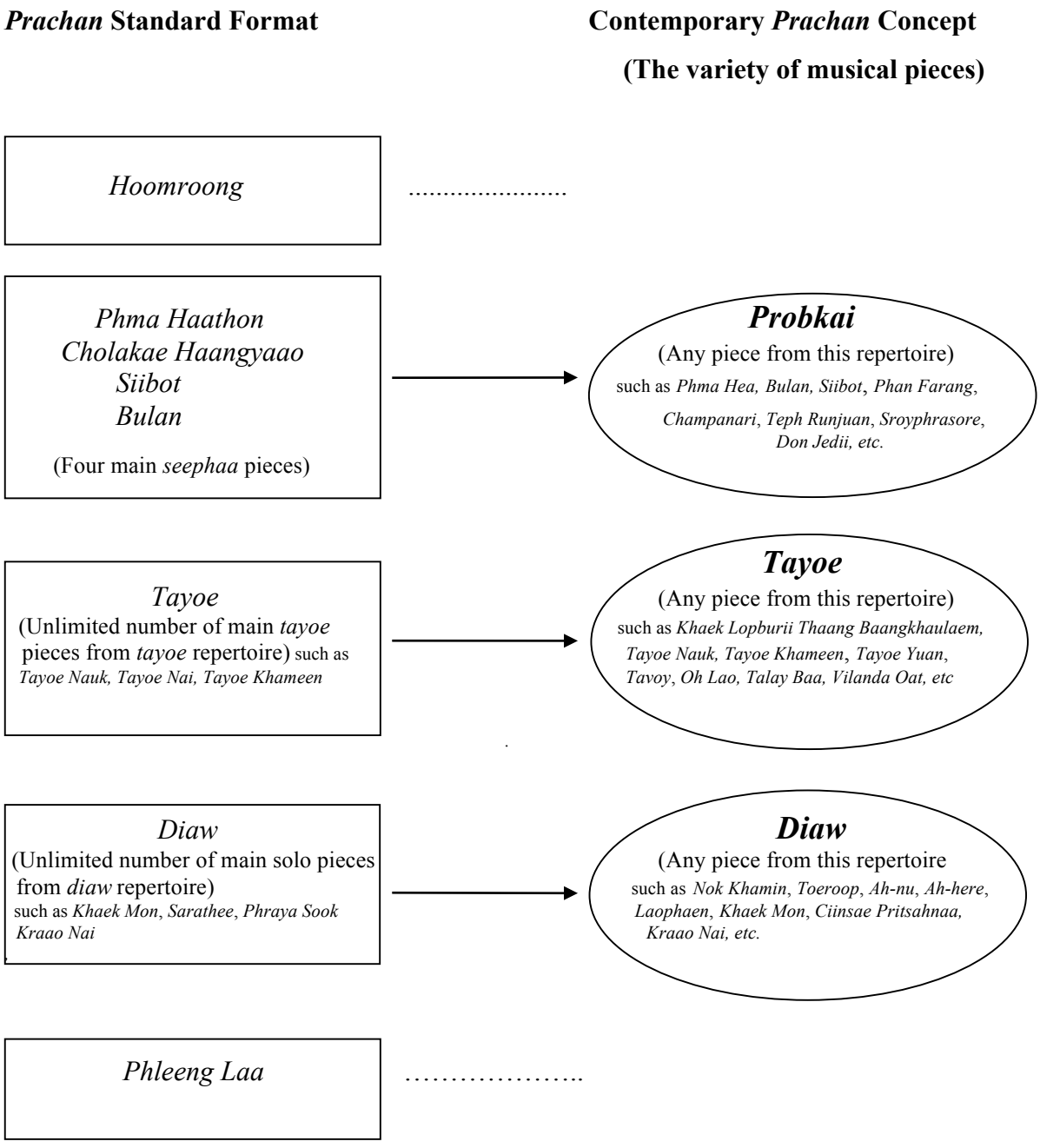
Additionally, in the *diaw* or solo repertoire, traditionally, in the standard form of *prachan*, musicians used the main intense solo pieces to compete with each other, such as *Khaek Mon* (แขกมอญ), *Sarathee* (สารถี), *Phraya Sook* (พญาโศก), and *Kraoo Nai* (กราวใน).[73] However, nowadays, the solo pieces used in *prachan* are quite varied and include *Nok Khamin* (นกขมิ้น), *Toi Ruup* (ต่อยรูป), *Ah-nu* (อาหนู), *Ah-here* (อาเฮีย), *Laophaen* (ลาวแพน), *Ciinsae Pritsahnaa* (จีนแสปริศนา) and so forth. Furthermore, in competitions *prachan* musicians place the duty of competing in the solo piece only on the *ranaat eek* player of each ensemble. This contrasts with the traditional form in which all of the main musical instruments in the ensemble were involved in the solo section of *prachan*. Following

[72] In *prachan*, the *tayoe* repertoire (*phleeng tayoe*) is also known as *phleeng* (*prapeet*) *naa thap tayoe* meaning a type of musical piece using the *tayoe* rhythmic pattern. However, they usually call it *naa thap tayoe*, which means *tayoe* rhythmic pattern, in practice, which indicates the use of a *saung maai* rhythmic pattern. This is because normally *phleeng tayoe* or *tayoe* pieces (such as *Tayoe Khameen, Tayoe Nauk, Tayoe Nai*) are accompanied by a *saung maai* rhythmic pattern, so musicians often interchange the name of the repertoire '*tayoe*' and rhythmic cycle '*saung maai*' unintentionally. Therefore, some musicians nowadays are acquatinted with the term *tayoe* and usually call it *naa thap tayoe* rather than *naa thap saung maai*.

[73] These solo pieces are the pieces from the five main solo pieces in Thai court music.

this aspect, it seems that *prachan* pieces can be chosen freely in general from each repertoire in the present competition. Arguably, the pieces that are selected from the three main repertoires of *prachan* at present are adapted to be more varied, but there is a limit to the number of pieces from each repertoire in a performance. This can be considered a development of the *prachan* concept in terms of the variety of musical pieces. Figure 5.5 below illustrates the change in the *prachan* concept from the standard to the contemporary format (*prokai*, *tayoe*, and *diaw*). We can see the trends in the present *prachan* with the expansion of choices of *prachan* pieces in each repertoire. It might be said that the development of the *prachan* concept in regard to the variety of musical pieces in a performance has influenced the change in contemporary *prachan* as a form of musical response and exchange of musical ideas in different pieces.

Figure 5.5: The development of the *prachan* concept from the standard to the contemporary format (*probkai*, *tayoe* and *diaw*) showing the expansion of choices of *prachan* pieces in each repertoire



In regard to the type of musical pieces used in *prachan*, most *prachan* musicians believe that the standard form of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* is based on performance at the *saam chan* metrical level.[74] This means that in the main performance of *prachan*

[74] The form of *saam chan* metrical level is related to the development of the *Sakawa* game in Thai culture, which was a popular style of musical piece in performances during the reign of King Rama III and IV.

piiphatt seephaa (*hoomroong*, four main *seephaa* pieces, *tayoe*, and *diaw*), traditionally, musicians competed with each other at the *saam chan* metrical level. In contrast, in contemporary *prachan* competitions, musicians focus on different types or forms of musical pieces. Largely, they compete with each other in the form of the *phleeng thao* (*เพลงเถา*) or *thao* (*เถา*) repertoire. The form of the *thao* repertoire[75] has been held in high esteem among the Royal family and Thai people since the reign of King Rama IV (1861-1868). *Thao* is a form of musical repertoire comprising melodies at three *chans* or metrical levels, including *saam chan* (*สามชั้น*), *saung chan* (*สองชั้น*), and *chan dieo* (*ชั้นเดียว*). Musicians generally perform a musical piece in *thao* form (*phleeng thao*) from *saam chan* to *chan dieo* in sequence. Significantly, this form also represents the concept of the expanded and contracted form of the fundamental structure and rhythmic cycle of Thai traditional music pieces. The figure below shows an example of the *thao* form in relation to the *probkai* rhythmic cycle, played by *klong saung naa* (*กลองสองหน้า*) or *saung naa* (*สองหน้า*) (cylindrical double-head drum),[76] and the *ching* (a pair of small cymbals) rhythmic cycle.

Figure 5.6: An example of the *thao* form with *probkai* and *ching* rhythmic cycles in Thai notation. This *probkai* rhythmic pattern is specifically for the *saung naa* drum

Saam Chan

	o		+		o		+
- - - Ph	- - - P	- - - Th	- T - P	- - - Th	- T - P	- - - P	- - - Tp
	o		+		o		+
- - - -	- - - Ph	- - - -	- - - Ph	- - - Tg	- T - T	- Tg T Tg	- P - Ph

[75] It can be performed both by musical instruments only and also in the form of alternation between a singer and musical instruments in an ensemble.
[76] Traditionally, *saung naa* is considered as a drum used in *piiphaat seephaa* music.

Saung Chan

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
- - - -	- - - Ph	- - - P	- - - Tp	- - - Ph	- - - Ph	- - - Tp	- - - Ph

Chan Dieo

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
- - - Ph	- P - -	- Ph - P	- Tp - Ph

* *Saung naa*: Ph = Phrung, P = Pa, Th = Tha, T = Ting, Tp = Tup, Tg = Theng.

*Ching: o = Ching, + = Chap

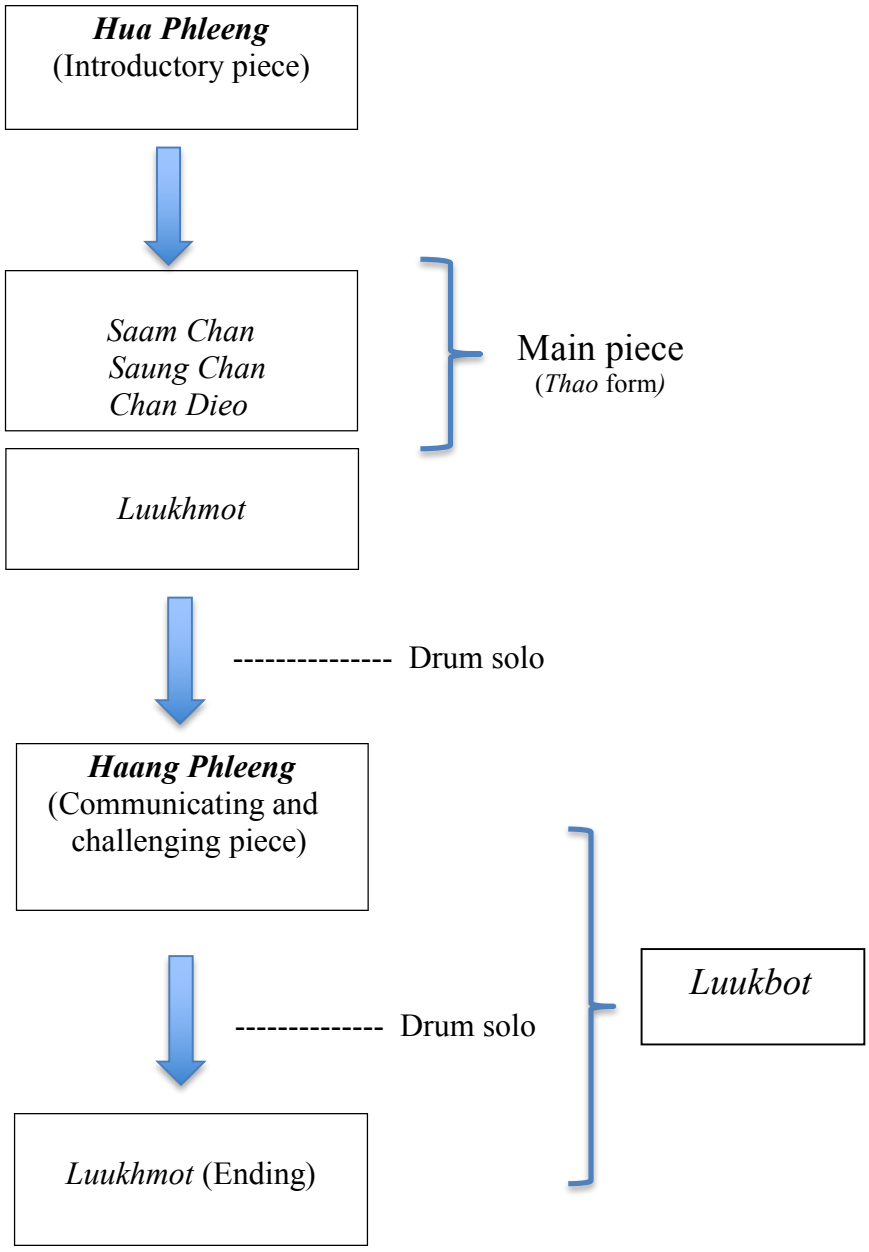
The figure above illustrates the *thao* form (*saam chan*, *saung chan*, and *chan dieo*) with *probkai* and *ching* rhythmic cycles. The length of the *prokai* and *ching* rhythmic cycles identifies the expanded and contracted form of the metrical levels. We can see that *saam chan* (sixteen bars) is twice the length of *saung chan* (eight bars), while *saung chan* is also twice the length of *chan dieo* (four bars). In other words, *saam chan* is the expanded form of *saung chan*, whereas *chan dieo* is the contracted form of *saung chan*. As for *prachan*, it can be said that nowadays musicians mostly prefer to perform *prachan piiphaat seephaa* in the *thao* form rather than only at the *saam chan* metrical level, since this form allows musicians and music masters to show a variety of compositions at different metrical levels and tempos as well as the beauty and sophistication of compositions in the expanded and contracted forms of each musical piece. This form also relates to the trend of applying *haang phleeng* piece in *prachan piiphaat seephaa* nowadays.

A striking feature of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* at present is the *hua phleeng* (หัวเพลง) and *haang phleeng* (หางเพลง). In particular, the *haang phleeng* piece is considered to be a significant part of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* nowadays. As I mentioned in the

previous chapters, the *hua phleeng* is a small introductory piece, and the *haang phleeng* is a piece performed after the main piece before the *luukhmot* or ending section. In my fieldwork, the majority of the *prachan* ensembles applied the *hua phleeng* and *haang phleeng* in their *prachan* pieces in both the *probkai* and *tayoe* repertoire. At *prachan*, some ensembles use the *hua phleeng* as a small piece to introduce their ensemble before the main piece begins. It is a trend for some ensembles to represent the identity of their music school or institution through the *hua phleeng* piece. On the other hand, the *haang phleeng* is considered to be a significant piece that musicians always play in contemporary *prachan.* It is mostly performed after the main piece (in *thao* form: *saam chan*, *saung chan*, and *chan dieo*) to represent musical ideas by means of communicating with and challenging their rivals before ending with *luukhmot* (ลูกหมด).

A new trend in *haang phleeng* that musicians use at present was developed by the Tosa-nga music school, particularly by Khun-in and Chaiyuth Tosa-nga, two famous *prachan* musicians and music teachers at present. The figure below illustrates the *hua phleeng* and *haang phleeng* pieces in the contemporary form of the *probkai* and *tayoe* repertoire in contemporary *prachan*.

Figure 5.7: Present-day structure of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* performance with *hua phleeng* and *haang phleeng* in the *probkai* and *tayoe* repertoires



By and large, the present form of *prachan* with the *hua phleeng* and *haang phleeng* in the *probkai* and *tayoe* repertoire comprises the *hua phleeng* (introductory piece), the main piece (*thao* form with *luukhmot*), the *haang phleeng* (communicating and challenging piece) and the *luukhmot* (ending section). The combination and continuum of the performance between the *haang phleeng* and *luukhmot* is generally

called *luukbot* (ลูกบท). Besides, the musicians usually play a solo on the *klong khaek* (กลองแขก) drums as bridging sections before and after the *haang phleeng* to signify the starting point of *haang phleeng* (as an extension part from the main piece) and of the end of *haang phleeng* before ending with *luukhmot* (see figure 5.7). Even though the figure represents the contemporary form of *prachan*, in practice, musicians focus mainly on the form of *thao* (*saam chan*, *saung chan*, and *chan dieo*) and *haang phleeng*. It might be said that the *haang phleeng* is perceived as an important part of contemporary *prachan*.

As for the *haang phleeng*, it can be said that traditionally there was no *haang phleeng* piece at *prachan* or in Thai music performance.[77] Arguably, the first development of *haang phleeng* was introduced in Thai music by musicians or music masters who played small traditional pieces after the main piece. They used the *haang phleeng* piece in support of the main piece to be more vivid and stimulating. The small traditional pieces are mostly at the *chan dieo* or *saung chan* metrical level, from *phleeng ruang*[78] or *phleeng phaasaa*.[79] Apparently, *Luang* Pradit Phairau (Sorn Silapabanleng) (1881-1954), a great Thai music master and composer in the twentieth century, was the first person to introduce a new trend in using *hua phleenge* and *haang phleeng* in *phiiphaat* performance. The most popular piece, *Saen Khamnung* (แสนคำนึง) (*thao*)[80] was apparently a distinctive piece representing *hua phleeng* and a new style of his composition in *haang phleeng* with the western dialect in marching style. Then, the *haang phleeng* was composed and developed in different variations and styles among

[77] Chaiya Thangmisi and Boonsraang Reungnond, two famous *piiphaat* music masters, interview 2013.
[78] *Phleeng ruang* is a musical repertoire that is a form of suites of connected pieces without lyrics or a singing part. It is traditionally used to accompany rituals and ceremonies, and is played by a *piiphaat* ensemble.
[79] *Phleeng phasaa* is a musical repertoire encompassing music that is composed or modified by certain musical styles and elements from foreign music. It is used to represent the foreign dialect or character in Thai music.
[80] Historically, *Luang* Pradit Phairau composed this piece to express his disappointment and to complain to the military government under Field Marshall 'Pleak Pibulsonggram' (1897-1964) at that time about the prohibition of the performance of traditional Thai music in public according to the National policy or Cultural Mandates during 1939-1942.

musicians and several renowned music masters such as *Khruu* Boonyong Gatekong[81] [82] (1920-1996) (Thai National Artist 2531/1988, Thai music), *Khruu* Suphot Tosa-nga (1939-1993), *Khruu* Somphop Khampraseart (1925-2000).

A new concept of *haang phleeng* was evidently presented again at the end of the twentieth century by Khun-in (Nalongrit) and Chaiyuth Tosa-nga, two brothers from the Tosa-nga music school. They developed the *haang phleeng* as a form of communicating meaning and challenge through phrases of melody and solo pieces in *prachan*. In a new concept of *haang phleeng*, the length of the *haang phleeng* performance was increased from the traditional one. The melodies and lyrics of Thai pop and folk songs (*luuk thuung*) were also applied to a new composition in *haang phleeng*.[83] They were applied in order to respond to and communicate the meaning of the music to their rivals and audiences. The idea of responding to and communicating the meaning through *haang phleeng* at *prachan* is apparently accepted by the majority of *piiphaat* ensembles at present. This concept has become valued among *piiphaat* players in Thai music circles and represents a new type of *prachan* performance at present. Arguably, in the contemporary *prachan*, Khun-in (Nalongrit) and Chaiyuth Tosa-nga can be considered as pioneers who created a new style of *prachan* through *haang phleeng.*

Haang phleeng is a way to represent the musical creativity of the musicians. It also represents the variety and development of Thai music through the different sounds and *samniang* (*สำเนียง*) or characteristics of foreign dialects. In traditional Thai music, after performing a main piece, which has a foreign dialect such as the *phma* (*พม่า*) (Burmese), *mon* (*มอญ*), *ciin* (*จีน*) (Chinese), *farang* (*ฝรั่ง*) (Western), or *khaek* (*แขก*)

[81] *Khruu* Boonyong Gatekong is accepted as a great *ranaat eek* master and composer. His compositions and musical style in Thai music are highly esteemed among Thai music circles.
[82] *Khruu* Boonyong Gatekong is accepted as a great *ranaat eek* master and composer. His compositions and musical style in Thai music are highly esteemed among Thai music circles.
[83] See Chapter 3 for the way that musicians applied the melodies and lyrics of Thai pop and folk songs in *hang phleeng* in my fieldwork, for example the *prachan* between the Sit-Reungnond and Saue Banlengsin ensembles at Wat Phra Phireen.

(Indian), that dialect will be revealed again in the *haang phleeng* to show the creativity of the musicians or composers. How to represent the foreign dialect in their own composition or arrangement in *haang phleeng* is very challenging for musicians. The significance of *haang phleeng*, evidently, appeared in my *prachan* fieldwork. Interestingly, at *prachans*, musicians mostly focused on the *haang phleeng* to challenge each other. They responded to each other by applying phrases of solo pieces, particularly, *Kraao Nai* or *Tayoe Diaw*, in the course of the *haang phleeng* and the main piece (see Chapter 2). This is because those pieces are considered as the high level and status solo pieces. They have a significant meaning, demonstrating the status and superior power of the musician's perception, as mentioned in Chapter 3. Moreover, they tried to show the adaptation of *haang phleeng* by playing different foreign dialects in Thai music through actual foreign musical instruments. For instance, they intentionally used a Chinese wooden fish to accompany a Chinese dialect and a drum kit, bass drum and *cajon* to accompany the melodies or phrases of Thai pop songs that have a Western dialect. As I stated previously, in *prachan*, *haang phleeng* can be considered as a sphere of musical creativity and response that affects the way in which musicians challenge and communicate with each other through musical techniques, body movement and the meaning of music (see Chapter 2). It provides an opportunity for musicians to improvise and create a story through melodies loaded with symbolic cultural meaning to challenge and defeat each other in the competition. *Haang phleeng* seems to be one of the most significant aspects of conceptual fighting representing the concept and a trend in *prachan* at present.

Beyond the variety and type of *prachan* pieces and *haang phleeng* in *prachan* performance, the present-day trend of performing *prachan* pieces at high speed and the way that a pair of *klong khaek* drums is used in performances should also be taken into consideration. It is obvious that '*khwaam hwai*' (ความไหว) (known as *hwai* (ไหว)) or the

way of showing a high speed in performance is the main aspect of responding to and representing the musical ability of each musical ensemble in *prachan* competitions. Evidently, most *prachan* musicians at present try to challenge each other by increasing the tempo with musical techniques in their performance to show their musicianship in such pieces. I mentioned an example in my fieldwork in Chapter 2, when a *ranaat eek* player, the leader of the Sit-Reungnond ensemble, was under pressure when he heard the speed of the performance of the Kunchaun Duriya ensemble gradually increasing during the competition. He then tried to warm his wrists by practising on the instrument as much as he could, preparing his muscles and energy to perform at a higher speed when it was his ensemble's turn on the stage. This situation happened because due to the nature and trends in present *prachan*, musicians are not supposed to play at the speed as the last ensemble or their rival performers; rather they have to respond to their rivals with a faster speed and superior techniques rather than showing a sophisticated melody or sound quality.

It might be said that performing *prachan* at high speed is a trend that is accepted among most *prachan* musicians at present as showing the potential of an excellent *prachan* musician. However, this is quite different from the traditional concept in which *prachan* competitions focused on *hwai thon* (ไหวทน) or *hwai chut* (ไหวชัด), which means a high-speed performance over a long time with a clear and sophisticated melody. By and large, some music masters and adept musicians argue that by focusing very much on the speed rather than the quality of the performance, this makes the performance of musicians at present incomparable with *prachan* musicians in the past. Significantly, they argue that it is true that most musicians nowadays have *khwaam hwai* or good musical skills in terms of producing a high speed performance, which is noticeably faster than *prachan* in the past. However, apparently, they lack the delicacy of a clear melody and sound quality in their performance.

Likewise, the trend in using *klong khaek* (a pair of double-headed drums) instead of *klong saung naa* or *saung naa* (cylindrical double-head drum) in *prachan* ensembles is also related to the high esteem given to applying a high speed and musical techniques in *prachan* competitions. Traditionally, the *saung naa* is the drum used in *piiphaat seephaa* music. It was adapted to the *seephaa* ensemble, since its sound quality is softer and more suitable for the *seephaa* singing and ensemble than the *taphoon* (ตะโพน) (double-headed drum in a barrel shape on a wooden stand), which is normally used in *piiphaat* ritual music. Hence, the *saung naa* became the standard drum used in the *piiphaat seephaa* ensemble and *prachan* competition following the traditional *seephaa* form.

Nevertheless, with the development and change of musical style and audiences at present, most musicians tend to use the *klong khaek* instead of *saung naa* in the *prachan piiphaat seephaa.* Chaiyuth Tosa-nga, a famous *ranaat eek* player and *prachan* musician, points out the significant reason for this change, which is the *klong khaek*'s flexibility in producing sounds straightforwardly and loudly, as well as the variety of rhythmic patterns, which support the new trend in *ranaat eek* melodies and ensembles with their high speeds and complicated techniques.[84] However, this idea is opposed by some music masters and adept musicians who try to preserve the traditional form and style of *seephaa* and *prachan* music. They are largely concerned that the new trend in *prachan*, whereby *saung naa* is replaced by the *klong khaek*, is damaging the *seephaa* tradition. To a certain extent, it is possible to say that the noticeable reason why a pair of *klong khaek* drums is now held in very high esteem among musicians and is included in the *prachan* ensemble is because it responds to the style and trend in present *prachan*, which focuses on speed with a variety of melodies and musical techniques. Furthermore, this has also led to a new trend of placing the *klong khaek* beside the *ranaat eek* player or in front of the *prachan* ensemble, since its sounds and its delicate rhythmic patterns

[84] Chaiyuth Tosa-nga, interview, 4/9/2012

effectively support the *ranaat eek* performance, as a lead instrument, in competition. Additionally, the lack of *saung naa* experts and successors, as well as the way the secret knowledge and techniques of its rhythmic patterns have been protected, have contributed to its unpopularity, resulting in it being replaced by the *klong khaek* in *prachan* ensembles.

Changes in Mediation

We cannot deny that nowadays we are living in a world of globalisation in which people from different nationalities and cultures have more access to interact with each other locally and globally. Significantly, people have more opportunity to gain experience and develop their potential in several respects by learning, communicating and exchanging their ideas through advanced technology and media. The development of technology at present resonates with the progress and dispersion of trading and modern communication among people around the world. We might accept that, at present, technology and media are part of peoples' living, communicating and learning. In other words, they are becoming increasingly influential in the way in which people think and perceive information. In the world of *prachan* or Thai music competition, music technology and media have had an enormous effect on the process and the way of understanding *prachan* music. Importantly, their development has shaped the way in which musicians represent and understand *prachan* from new perspectives. It is intriguing to perceive how technology and media influence the way that musicians respond to and defeat each other in *prachan*, and how this impacts on the way in which musicians and audiences understand *prachan* in the modern world. This might be a significant aspect in terms of broadening our minds regarding the development of *prachan* as well as its effects on Thai music at present.

Prachan and Amplification

When I first participated in *prachan* as a musician, I enjoyed playing music and learning about the concept of *prachan* performance as a way of representing musical competence and strategy by responding to the other ensemble. I generally considered that *prachan* was an idea of developing musical proficiency and wisdom. However, during my *prachan* fieldwork in 2012-2013, I found that the idea of *prachan* at present is related not only to the potential of musicians themselves, but also other factors involved in the competition. One of the significant factors that I found in regard to *prachan* was the impact of music technology. It might be said that the more that I participated in *prachans* in my fieldwork, the more I became aware of the significant effect of music technology on the competition.

According to Christopher Waterman, in his work 'Juju: A social history and Ethnography of an African Popular' in 1990, the introduction of electronic amplification (such as microphones and electric contact microphones) after World War II in juju performance practice had a significant impact on the transformation of Yoruba music (1990:82-84). He argues that the electronic amplification allowed Juju musicians to incorporate a wider range of drummers to facilitate the application of traditional Yoruba values and its deep musical techniques; it is a means of reemphrasing the self-conscious indigenisation of musical expression (1990:83-84). Following this thought, at most of the *prachan* events I saw musicians talking critically about the sound quality and identity of their *prachan* performance as a consequence of having microphones, amplifiers, audio mixers and so forth. This prompted me to realise how *prachan* has changed with respect to traditional Thai music in that in competitions now there is much focus on sound quality that relies on electronic amplification.

This became noticeable when I participated in significant *prachan* events such as *prahan* Wat Phra Phireen and *prachan Ngaan* Loy-Krathong Ratchaburi. At the

prachan at Wat Phra Phireen (Phraphireen temple), for example, many of the ensembles tried to adjust the stage microphones for their instruments. Moreover, both before and during the competition they kept telling the event's sound engineer to adjust the volume up or down as well as how to mix the sound on the audio mixer to achieve the best sound quality for their ensembles. Apparently, during the competition, the way that the musicians used the microphones and asked the sound engineer to mix the sounds of their performance had an effect on the way that their rivals and the audience perceived their performance. This might be considered as either an advantage or a disadvantage. By and large, using microphones can help the audience to hear the sound of all of the instruments in ensembles, but because of the limitation to the number of microphones (one microphone per instrument) and the complex characteristics of the sounds of *piiphaat* instruments, the musicians were not able to express the good sound quality and the identity of their ensemble's performance to the audience properly. Through my experience at this temple, for instance, when K ensemble performed, throughout the whole piece I was not able to hear the sounds of *khong wong yai* (large gong circle) and *pii nai* (quadruple-reed oboe) clearly. In the case of the *khong wong yai,* it is impossible for the microphone to cover all of the sixteen sounds of this instrument, since its structure is basically large and the low register of the gong notes is far from the position of the microphone.

Additionally, in *prachan*, there are around ten musical instruments in each ensemble producing different sound features, including melodic percussion (such as *ranaat eek, khong wong yai*), rhythmic percussion (such as *saung naa*, *klong khaek, ching*), and woodwind (*pii nai*) alongside a singer. This means that in competitions the musicians do need at least ten microphones for their ensemble to support the different sound characteristics of their instruments. Therefore, this is a serious issue for the musicians or the sound engineer who controls the sound system. The problem is that

each ensemble or music school has its own preferred sound for its instruments and ensemble. Furthermore, the fact is that, scientifically, a different player on the same instrument, a different musical instrument, and a different position or distance in respect of the microphone, can affect the whole sound of a performance. Hence, it is particularly difficult for a sound technician to respond to the sounds of all ensembles with their preferences. This may be due to the sound technician's lack of experience, but in practice it is still hard work for the technician to mix all of the instrument sounds in balance to the musicians' satisfaction. Often, this leads to a discussion between the musicians and the audience, who may ask, 'why are we not able to hear the sounds of the *pii nai* (quadruple-reed oboe) or *khong wong yai* (large gong circle) instruments in an ensemble?', or 'why are the sounds of that ensemble and instruments too loud or unbalanced?' In Thai music, traditionally, only some music masters/music schools focused on the sound volume and sound quality of an ensemble, and expected to hear the sound characteristics and the balance of sound of each instrument as well as the ensemble as a whole. Nevertheless, since the advent of amplification and technologies, the idea of listening to the sounds of instruments in detail and the sound balance of an ensemble has become general knowledge and more of a serious issue among *prachan* musicians. However, the identity or sound quality of each ensemble still depends upon the musicians' preference and the listening practices of each music school.

Figure 5.8: The Sit-Reungnond ensemble tests the sounds of their instruments with microphones before having an actual *prachan* at Ngaan Loy-Krathong Ratchaburi

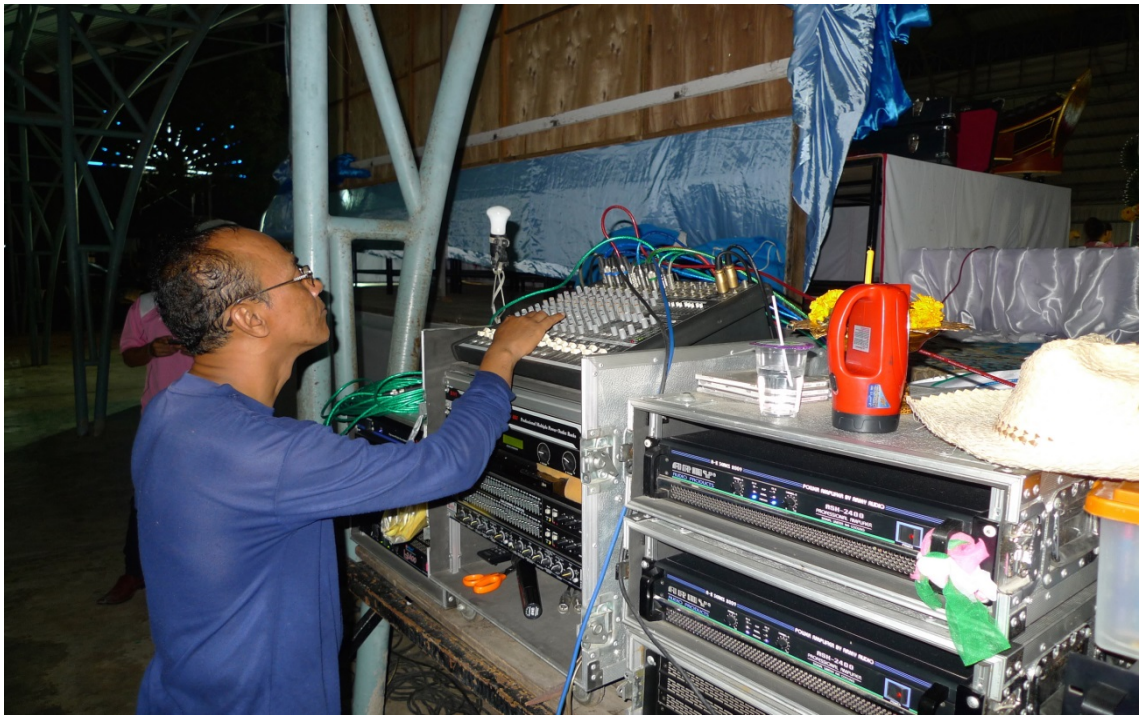


Figure 5.9: A sound technician controlling the audio mixer during a *prachan* competition

Despite the obvious problems with applying music technology to the *prachan* at present, musicians still use it in competitions. Significantly, I found that musicians tried to make use of technology to enhance their achievement in competition. This might be a feature of *prachan* at present. By and large, it can be said that microphones and audio mixers are used for volume performance and to respond and communicate with others at *prachan*. Significantly, musicians try to use music technology to represent their identity through the loudness and clarity of the sounds.

At a *prachan*, the way that musicians represent themselves as excellent players or professional musicians, particularly on *ranaat eek*, is generally through the terms *hwaai-thon* (ไหวทน), *hwaai-daung* (ไหวดัง) and *chat* (ชัด), meaning fast and durable, as well as fast with loudness and clarity. This means that an excellent player is a person who is able to perform a musical piece, maintaining high speed while still maintaining the volume and clarity of their performance. These terms describe a highly-skilled *prachan* musician. In fact, there are few music masters and musicians in *piiphaat* history who have had all of these skills. Therefore, the terms *hwaai-thon*, *hwaai-daung* and *chat* have become popular phrases regarding the ideal among *piiphaat* musicians, and musicians usually mention them in regard to a well-rounded musician at competitions. I realised how musical competence is represented through technology at one *prachan* ensemble in which I participated, during both the rehearsal and the competition. At the *prachan* competition, a famous *ranaat eek* player, Y gained a great response from the audience. She touched the hearts of the audience both in the solo and ensemble pieces by employing complex musical techniques, fast tempo as well as the loudness and clear melodies on the *ranaat eek*. In other words, Y was able to show the elements of a well-rounded musician: *hwaai-thon*, *hwaai-daung* and *chat* (fast whilst durable, as well as fast with loudness and clarity). However, during Y's performance on stage, I was questioning the sound quality, which was different from that I had

experienced in her rehearsals. I remembered that Y had a high level of skills in playing the *ranaat eek* with complex techniques and a fast speed, but the sound quality of her performance was diminished. Unexpectedly, at the *prachan*, Y was able to make a big sound on her instrument whilst maintaining a fast speed throughout the whole piece. This prompted me to realise the influence of the microphone, amplifier and the audio mixer on Y's performance. Generally, these support the sound quality of musicians in performances to be louder and clearer. However, the fact is that at *prachan* the way that musicians are able to show their musical competence in terms of speed and techniques with powerful and formidable sounds means they are considered to be better than their rivals.

In my fieldwork, I was surprised that most *prachan* ensembles tried to use microphones and an audio mixer to increase the volume of their performance and adjust the sound quality to their preference. I had experience with the ways that musicians used music technology at *prachan*; it seemed that they concentrated very much on how to make the sound of their ensembles and instruments better than that of others. Interestingly, in some cases where they wanted to outdo their rivals with the sound of a *ranaat eek* player who could make outstanding sounds at high speed, they intentionally put a microphone inside the gutter of the *ranaat eek* instrument or they put two or three more microphones on the stage in front of that instrument during the competition. Arguably, this can be considered as musical combat through sounds and power. The representation of sounds and power in music also relates to the work of Robert Walser in 1993, entitled 'Running with the devil', regarding the sounds and image of heavy metal and their relationship with gender. He argues that heavy metal musically expresses the controlling power and freedom of masculinity (Walser 1993:108). The metal songs include the articulation of controlling power by means of 'vocal extremes, guitar, guitar power chords, distortion, and sheer volume of bass and drums' drawing on

the virtually noisy clothing, jumping and confident walking on the stage, and so forth (Walser 1993:108-109).

Regarding music technology and *prachan*, there are also *prachan* musicians and music masters who disagree with using amplification technology in competitions according to the traditional concept of *prachan*. They argue that the use of microphones, amplifiers and audio mixers does not prove the actual musical proficiency of the musicians in competitions. For instance, in my fieldwork, at *prachan* Wat Sri Prawat, Kittisak Khaosathit, a musician from the Fine Arts Department of Thailand, argued that by using microphones, amplifiers, and an audio mixer with the control of a sound technician at the *prachan*, the musicians and the audience could not straightforwardly identify which ensembles or musicians were better than others. He stressed, 'if we would like to have a real *prachan*, each ensemble should perform without those technologies to show their actual musical competence'.[85] This also relates to the comment from *Khruu* Boonsang Reungnond, an adept *prachan* musician from the Department of Fine Arts and a famous music teacher from the Sit-Reungnond music school. He asserted that at *prachan*, he had never worried about microphone settings or even adjusted those for the sound quality of his ensemble, since he believes in his musicians' ability to perform rather than in music technology.[86]

In contrast, in this aspect, Chaiyuth Tosa-nga, a famous *ranaat eek* player and *prachan* musician argued that music technology is essential in *prachan* nowadays as a way of delivering the sound to others. He gave an example of how much more difficult it is for a singer in a *prachan* ensemble to sing or deliver voice quality to a large audience in public without a microphone and amplifier. In practice, by using a microphone and amplifier, 'a singer does not need to sing loudly or use so much energy

[85] Kittisak Khaosathit, interview, 20/10/2012
[86] Boonsang Reungnond, interview 2013.

to deliver her voice to the audience as in the past'.[87] He also stressed that music technology is significant for balancing the sound of an ensemble and, in fact, it has developed from the past to the present for both public performance and recording. Chaiyuth also claimed that as a new trend in present *prachan* with high-speed performance and complex techniques, the microphone and audio mixer can support and balance the sound of the *klong khaek* (a pair of double-headed drums) smoothly with the *ranaat eek* and other instruments in the ensemble during the performance. Following this kind of thinking, we can see that there is a contradiction between the idea of preserving the traditional *prachan* concept depending on the pure musical competence of musicians, and the contemporary idea of applying music technology in *prachan* to support the sounds of the instruments and ensemble in public performances. As stated previously, even though there is a contradiction regarding whether or not music technology can represent the reality of musicians' competence in *prachan*, we cannot deny that it has an enormous effect on present *prachan* performance. In practice, it can also be considered to be a part of the music strategy at *prachan* competitions.

Pradit Saengkrai, a sound engineer and music lecturer at Rungsit University in Bangkok, claimed that when he was a *prachan* musician in T, a famous *prachan* ensemble, he learned how to apply music technology in competitions. For instance, at *prachan*, his leader 'P' tried to apply music technology to his ensemble to enhance the level of his band's performance over their rivals. Generally, as a sound engineer, he claimed, 'I know full well that for the best sound quality for the instrument the distance between the microphone and instrument should be around one foot'.[88] However, at that time, his leader P had ordered him to position the microphone closer than usual, since this could help a *ranaat eek* player to conserve his power in performance and could save the energy of a player for the next round of the competition. Otherwise, his leader P

[87] Chaiyuth Tosa-nga, interview, 4/09/2013.
[88] Pradit Saengkrai, interview, 12/7/2013.

sometimes used him as a sound technician, to level up the volume from the audio mixer to help the sound of the *ranaat eek* and all of the instruments in the ensemble. He claimed that this method was very effective if a sound technician was also a *piiphaat* musician, since that person would know the cues of each piece, and which melodies and techniques the players wanted to show, and therefore, they would help them at the appropriate time in the competition. In Saengkrai's opinion, the setting of the microphones is significant. He also mentioned the significance of the sweet spot of a microphone in relation to an instrument, which, arguably, could make the best and full sound quality of that instrument. He added that if musicians at present have this kind of technical knowledge, it will help very much in actual competitions. Sanklai accepted that ultimately the microphone and amplifier have a significant effect on the sound quality and an ensemble's *prachan* strategy. This is a crucial point that means the *prachan* is not the same as in the past.

Regarding the relationship between music and technology, the work of James Kippen '*The Tabla of Lucknow*' in 2005 shows a similar view on this aspect. Kippen (2005:59-60) describes the politics and music tricks between a *tabla* player and soloist in the performance of an Indian musical ensemble. He refers to three tricks to annoy a soloist during his performance. One of the tricks is to bribe the sound technician to distort the sound of the other player by reducing the volume to such a level that the audience cannot hear his performance, or to increase it to a level that distorts his sounds. This is a way to make a musician concentrate less on his performance and not be able to convince the audience to listen to his performance. We can see that in Indian music, Indian musicians also know how to use music technology to reduce and distort the power of a musician's performance. This shows the relationship between music and technology in relation to conflict and politics in a different culture. Likewise, in *prachan*, even though music technology can help the musicians to balance the sound of

their ensemble in performances to a certain extent, it also causes some technical problems with sound management, which sometimes give rise to suspicion and conflict between ensembles. The fact is that sometimes the sounds of a *piiphaat seephaa* ensemble are distorted by the effect from the audio mixer feeding unpleasant sounds to the participants and audience. This is why musicians discuss and complain many times regarding the imbalance of the sound of their ensemble alongside the unpleasant sounds from the amplifier. They usually consider this to be due to the lack of experience of a sound technician, or they may suspect that the sound technician is a friend of one of their rivals. In this aspect, this also leads to the questions of fairness and judgement from the audience at *prachan* events.

As mentioned previously, even though there are some problems with the way in which music technology is used at *prachan*, most musicians still consider that it is indispensable in competitions. In practice, it helps musicians technically and strategically in *prachan* by adding power to the sounds of the instruments and ensembles to respond and disperse their musical ideas to others. With this approach in mind, metaphorically, music technology empowers musicians' performance to respond and approach to others by lessening the distance and space between the listeners (opponents and audience) and performers. In other words, music technology has significant power to support the sounds and identity of music to become obvious in musicians and audiences' perceptions and realisation in competitions. By considering *prachan* and its concept as a way of conceptual fighting, it can be said that music technology is regarded as one of the musical strategies at *prachan* in modern society supporting musicians in their determination to be winners in the competition.

Media and *Prachan*

Apart from music technology, one of the significant aspects that sheds light on the development of *prachan* at present is the media. Nowadays we are living in a world of media presentation, in which people are encouraged to communicate and exchange information and knowledge with each other. *Prachan* is apparently one of the crucial aspects that is influenced by the media, such as Thai film, national TV, audio recordings, video cameras, iPads, Youtube, and so forth. Not only do the media disperse and promote the idea of *prachan* to the public, they also change and develop the way of rehearsing for, expressing and perceiving *prachan*.

In 2004, a famous Thai music film '*โหมโรง*' (*Hom Rong)* or 'The Overture', by the Gimmick Film Company of Thailand, was released to the Thai public. This film had an enormous impact on the esteem of Thai music in Thai society as it represented traditional Thai music through the *prachan* competition. It might be said that *Hom Rong* was the first Thai film to represent traditional Thai music. This film received several prizes and was praised by critics (anonymously) as 'one of the best films in Thai film history' (Phosavadi 2005:50). *Hom Rong* is a biography of *Luang* Pradit Phairau (Sorn Silapabanleng) (1881-1954), a great music master and composer of traditional Thai music in the twentieth century. It illustrates the dilemma of Sorn's musical life from the golden age when traditional Thai music and *prachan* was fruitful and held in high esteem among Siamese (Thai) society, under the support of the Thai royal family, to the background of traditional music after the end of absolute Monarchy in Thailand in 1932 and the arrival of Thai Nationalist policy and the Cultural Mandate (1939-1943) by means of the concept of 'civilisation'.[89] Regarding *prachan*, the story started with Sorn

[89] The concept of 'civilisation' in this context refers to the Thai Nationalist policy or Cultural Mandates under the government of Field Marshal Plaek Pibulsonggram (1938-1944). It was an idea of westernisation in which people should obey the concept of western culture. It was viewed as a 'civilised culture' including the people's lifestyle, dress, manners, and music. This policy also led to the rule of restricting the performance of traditional Thai music in public.

as a child living and learning *piiphaat* music with his father in Aumpawa district, Samutprakarn province. When he was a teenager, he won several *prachans* and was renowned as a genius *ranaat eek* player in the province. His life changed dramatically when His Royal Highness Prince Phanupanwong Woradaat, known as Prince Burapa, came to Samutprakarn province and asked him to serve as a *ranaat eek* player at Burapa palace. Prince Burapa was one of the children of King Rama IV who was fascinated by *piiphaat* music and arranged several *prachan* events between palaces at that time. Sorn served the prince at Burapa palace as a *ranaat eek* player in his private ensemble and was trained to be a great musician, learning with many famous music masters. Prince Burapa supported Sorn to learn and practise music seriously in order to train him to compete with other famous *piiphaat* ensembles. Sorn gained a reputation as a talented musician from several *prachans* with others. Throughout his young life, he served Prince Burapa by participating in several *prachan* events with great musicians from other palaces. This film depicts one of the *prachans* between the ensembles of two royal palaces, which ensured Sorn received a lasting reputation as a *ranaat eek* genius. Ultimately, Sorn won that competition by playing the *ranaat eek* in a *Choet* (เชิด) piece one-to-one with Khun-in (alias). He won with his new *ranaat eek* techniques and superior speed.

Figure 5.10: Thai music film '*โหมโรง*' (*Hom Rong*), 'The Overture', by the Gimmick Film Company of Thailand, in 2004

Apart from the concept of *prachan* music and the changes in Thai society, this film also indicates the development of *prachan* through Sorn's creativity in music. *Luang* Pradit Phairau (Sorn Silapabanleng) was widely regarded as the most remarkable music teacher and musician of the twentieth century. He was in fact an innovative person who broke with musical tradition by creating new *ranaat eek* techniques such as *sabut* (สะบัด), *kaapluuk-kaapdauk* (คาบลูกคาบดอก) and a way to control the arm and wrist muscles by establishing strength to increase speed in *ranaat eek* performances. Significantly, his new creations in musical techniques at that time have become a popular style at present in *ranaat eek* performances. Beyond Sorn's musical life learning music with several music masters at the palace, this film also points out the relationships between the Thai royal family and musicians by means of the royal patronage system. This relates to *prachan*, as it was a musical trend among the royal family at that period. *Prachan piiphaat seephaa* in fact was developed to entertain the high class. Most palaces and wealthy houses at that time had their own *piiphaat* ensemble. Moreover, the royal family and wealthy people usually arranged a *prachan* event to show off their own ensemble to others. This film increased the significance of *prachan*, which was held in very high esteem by the royal family and the elite of Thai society at that time.

It might be said that this film resulted in increased public interest in traditional Thai music. In 2004, the Thai Minister of Culture employed this film to promote Thai culture and identity to foreign envoys in Thailand as part of the Taksin government's policy. After the film's debut, *Hom Rong* was promoted by several media - newspapers, magazines, television - and became the talk of the town. After the film had been released for around two weeks, *piiphaat* music, along with the words *prachan* and *hom rong* became well-known in Thai society. Film director Ithisunthorn Vichailuk was invited to explain the phenomenon of *Hom Rong* and the inspiration for *prachan* music

on several variety and talk shows. Unpredictably, the Thai traditional and contemporary music band 'Korphai' (กอไผ่), who accompanied this film, was also invited to perform and demonstrate Thai music both in *piiphaat seephaa* and contemporary music at several significant events. As I am one of the Korphai band who accompanied the sounds of *pii nai* (quadruple-reed oboe) in the *Hom Rong* film, I remember that my band was invited to perform Thai music and demonstrate *piiphaat* music with the concept of *prachan* at many events such as press conferences, variety shows, gala dinners, concerts in the Phrayathai palace and so forth. At that time the Korphai band performance schedule was full for several months, presenting Thai music and the concept of *prachan*.

The effect of *Hom Rong* was to arouse public interest in Thai music and culture. Unpredictably, in that period, traditional Thai music became popular among several music schools and institutions in Thailand. In fact, at that time, many new Thai music schools were launched in Thai society to respond to and support the dramatic increase in people who were interested in traditional Thai music. Additionally, this film also had a huge impact on the Thai music industry. Music factories in many places in Thailand received a large amount of orders for traditional Thai instruments, from music schools (both in the public and private sectors) and music shops.[90] Unsurprisingly, the best seller was *ranaat eek* instruments, since the hero in *Hom Rong* is *a ranaat eek* player.

Another aspect that must be borne in mind is that *Hom Rong* changed the attitude of Thai people towards Thai music. By and large, traditional Thai music was usually regarded as old-fashioned, since Thai society is mostly dominated by western music and culture. However, *Hom Rong* prompted Thai people to realise the value and variety of Thai music. They came to understand what *piiphaat* music or *prachan* is, and its importance in Thai culture. It changed the attitude towards Thai music of most of the

[90] Anant Narkkong, Thai music scholar, interview 2013

new Thai generation, who have been influenced by western and K-Pop culture. Whereas previously they thought that traditional Thai music was boring and unfashionable, it now became cool and exciting. *Hom Rong* encouraged many Thai music students, both *piiphaat* (*ปี่พาทย์*) and *khruang saai* (*เครื่องสาย*)[91] players, to be proud of themselves and confident as traditional musicians. *Piiphaat* music gained increased public interest and the word *prachan*, in terms of Thai culture, became widely known in Thai society. Even though the *Hom Rong* film had an enormous effect on Thai music and society, this trend only lasted for two years. However, it reminded people to consider the significance of Thai music and culture and encouraged Thai producers and organisers to create several variety shows on TV, as well as films and musicals in relation to *prachan* and Thai culture such as *Khunphrachau* (*คุณพระช่วย*) (2547/2004 - present) on Thai Modern Nine TV channel, *Asjaan Kantab* (*อัศจรรย์ คันธรรพ*) (2551-2552/2008-2009) on Thai PBS channel, the Thai film *Pengmaag Klong Phii Nang Manut* (*เป็งมาง กลองผีหนังมนุษย์*) (2550/2007) by Phranakorn Film, and *Hom Rong*: The Musical (*โหมโรงเดอะมิวสิคัล*) (2558/2015) by Tohgloam, Workpoint Entertainment Public Company Limited.

Aside from the film, it can be said that *prachan*, at present, is affected by media both from communication channels and data storage material such as TV, radio broadcasting, YouTube, iPads, smart phones, audio recordings, video cameras, and so forth. In my fieldwork, at *prachan* events, I saw musicians and audiences using the different media such as mobile phones, iPads, cameras and video cameras to record the *prachan* or the performance of their favourite ensembles. Intriguingly, some *prachan* musicians used this information to represent themselves in public on social media, and

[91] *Piiphaat* and *khruang saai* refer to both the type of player and ensemble. *Piiphaat* ensemble generally comprises Thai wooden xylophones (*ranaat eek* and *ranaat thum*), gong circles (*khong wong yai* and *khong wong lek*), oboe (*pii nai*) and rhythmic percussion instruments (such as *taphoon, klong khaek, saung naa, ching*, etc), whereas *khruang saai* ensemble generally comprises Thai two-stringed fiddles (*sau u* and *sau doung*), a fretted floor zither (*Jakhe*), a flute (*khlui*), a dulcimer (*khim*) and rhythmic percussion instruments (*thoon-ramana, ching, etc*)

most of them used this to their own advantage at *prachan* competitions. Significantly, the medium that *prachan* musicians make most use of at present is YouTube.

YouTube, arguably, does change the way in which Thai musicians perceive and learn *prachan* music as well as their way of life. In my fieldwork, I observed the behaviour of *prachan* musicians in normal life, as well as at rehearsals and competitions. Intriguingly, when they had a conversation together about the musical performances of great Thai music masters at *prachan*, such as *Khruu* Boonyong Gatekong or *Khruu* Somnuk Sornpraphan, or current famous *prachan* ensembles such as the Sit-Chaiyuth ensemble or the Sit-Suphot-Tosa-nga ensemble, they generally used their iPads, computers or even mobile phones to access the YouTube website for examples of those performances. In some circumstances, they tried to use YouTube to see and listen to the performances of other *prachan* ensembles. In this respect, Khun-in Tosa-nga, a famous *prachan* musician and film star, provided a significant aspect relating to the *prachan piiphaat seephaa* at present.

As stated previously, Khun-in Tosa-nga is renowned as the successful *prachan* musician who created the new trend for *haang phleeng* in *prachan* at present.[92] Khun-in claimed that nowadays media have influenced *piiphaat* musicians' lives and their way of thinking at *prachan*.[93] He pointed out that nowadays musicians can easily gain information about music. If they want to listen to some difficult or rare pieces played by a professional musician, they just access websites such as YouTube and listen to them. Apparently, these musical pieces and performances are mostly uploaded by scholars and musicians who would like to disperse Thai music knowledge and promote their own performances in public. Nevertheless, Khun-in mentioned that this was somewhat different from the traditional learning of Thai music. In Thai music, traditionally, he stressed, if someone wanted to learn music, they had to go to *samnak dontrii* (a music

[92] Khun-in is the owner of the Tosa-ng music school descended from his father *Khruu* Suphot Tosa-nga (1939-1993) - one of the famous *ranaat eek* players of the twentieth century
[93] Khun-in Tosa-nga, interview, 30/5/2013

school or music home) and pay respect to the teacher and pass the *wai khruu* ceremony to be accepted as a student or pupil of that music school. Furthermore, in order to learn some significant or high level pieces, they had to live and serve their teacher at *samnak dontrii* in exchange for learning music. Intriguingly, on this point, Khun-in tried to point out that in the past this was the traditional way of learning *piiphaat* music to become an adept musician. In contrast, nowadays, he argued that it was very easy for a musician or someone who wants to know and learn a Thai musical piece; they just click on their computer and listen to the music by means of YouTube. Likewise, in addition to *prachan* music, Khun-in argued that when the advent of media, particularly YouTube, appeared in musical society, musicians made use of it to their advantage as part of the musical strategy for their *prachan*.

Following this aspect, P, a *prachan* musician and music teacher, gave me an example of how YouTube had benefitted his performance at *prachan*. He said that, for instance, at his latest *prachan* event in 2013 with A ensemble, before the competition he planned his strategy alongside a new *haang phleeng* and a new arrangement of music to respond to his rivals at that competition. However, in order to prepare for the competition, he had to know the form and musical style of his rival performers and the skills of each musician in that ensemble. Hence, he just used his iPad to access the YouTube website and watched their performance at a *prachan* event, which someone had posted. P stressed that it was quite straightforward to see the *prachan* performances from different ensembles; in fact, there are many of them on YouTube. Apparently, he usually uses this website to help him to estimate the musical skill and wisdom of his rivals. It is very useful for him to make use of YouTube to estimate and make a musical strategy to respond to the other ensemble before an actual competition. As for the effects of YouTube, Cayari also discusses the advantages of YouTube for musical performance and education in her work ‘The YouTube Effect’, from 2011. She asserts

that YouTube and technology provide musicians with a chance to learn and develop their musical skills by allowing them to watch and listen to songs and music lessons (Cayari 2011:5). This also impacts on music education, as YouTube is used as an art medium to broaden students' and people's mind in terms of music listening, allowing them to criticise and discuss musical knowledge, this leads to the way in which people 'consume, create, and share music' (Cayari 2011:22).

As mentioned above, we can see a significant point about the change in *prachan* in terms of how *prachan* music is accessed and learned through media. This could be considered an advantage for *prachan*. However, in my fieldwork, there were many music teachers and *piiphaat* musicians who were concerned about this effect. They considered the introduction and use of media to be a way of damaging the value of Thai musical knowledge. Significantly, this is another point that relates to the changes in *prachan* music and culture. Regarding the term *huang wiicha* or the way of intensely protecting or guarding knowledge in Thai music, and its meaning and value in Thai music circles, as stressed by Myer-Moro (1993:116-120) and Swingviboonwong (2003:145-148), seemingly, how media and technology are used has had an enormous impact on this system, in particular on *prachan* rehearsals. *Prachans* in the past were very intense and highly competitive, and therefore musicians had to find a way to protect the musical knowledge that they would use at the *prachan* such as musical techniques, highly respected pieces, solo pieces and so forth. Hence, this is why, before the competition, they had to find a suitable place where other musicians would not be able to hear their music.

A good example is the *prachan* event between the *Khruu* Hyot ensemble and *Khruu* Sakon ensemble at a temple. Since their houses were near to each other on the same canal they had to find a different place to rehearse to protect their *prachan* pieces

from each other.[94] Likewise, another example is a famous *prachan* at the Thai National Theatre between the Prakhaungsin ensemble and Duriyapraneet ensemble, in which the Prakhaungsin ensemble had to find a secluded place to rehearse to protect their *prachan* pieces and techniques from being overheard by others. They assembled on the roof-deck, and asked someone to keep watch for spies from the other ensemble.[95]

The development of media has changed the way that musicians think about owning and guarding secrets or significant knowledge. Nowadays musicians can search for musical pieces on websites and listen to rare pieces and solo pieces such as *Kraao Nai* or *Tayoe Diaw* solo pieces. Traditionally, these pieces were considered to be the two highest level and status solo pieces, which a music master taught only to his best music pupils/students who had adequate knowledge and qualities in terms of musical proficiency as well as behaviour. Hence, in the past, there were very few musicians who could learn and play these pieces. Therefore, this might be considered as a change in Thai musical knowledge in relation to *prachan* competitions. Chapter 3 mentioned the current trend at *prachan* whereby most ensembles prefer to apply both *Kraao Nai* and *Tayoe Diaw* solo pieces in the course of *prachan* pieces. This might be an effect of YouTube or other media at present, which allow all musicians at different levels to get access to, copy and learn these high level solo pieces by themselves.

Following this point, there are two sides of the coin in terms of applying media to music. On the one hand, we may consider that the way that media are used to learn and share knowledge with others is the cause of the loss of musical value and traditional ways of learning music. Learning through media such as YouTube ignores the relationships between *khruu* (ครู) and *luuksit* (ลูกศิษย์) (teacher and pupils) which is the way of learning from 'hand to hand and heart to heart', the traditional way in Thai music culture. Learning music in the traditional way establishes relationships between

[94] Somchai Tabporn, interview, 10/9/2013.
[95] Wiboontam Peeanpong, interview, 19/3/2013.

learners and teachers and also with others in Thai music circles. Pupils also learn to know who they are, what they do, and why music is important to their society and culture. The truth is that music is not only a way of learning a musical piece or melodies; it is also a way of learning, absorbing and perceiving the manner, behaviour, and culture of that specific group and society (Rice 2003:77, Neuman 1990:45, Baily 1988:148-150). In other words, learning music involves learning through its musical context. Hence, learning through social media such as YouTube alone does not establish the relationships, manner and cultural aspects of being a well-rounded musician in a musical society. On the other hand, as for the significance of media, if we consider that the basic function of media or YouTube is communication and to disperse information to others through a social network (Lange 2008:88-89), we might realise that it is crucial for encouraging human musical creativity by broadening our views on different aspects. Arguably, the way that musicians at present use social media to learn and copy musical pieces and performances for competitions is also a way of preserving music. The more they perform such music or melodies, the longer those musical pieces and styles will remain in people's recognition in society.

To a certain extent, it is true to say that the way that musicians learn and copy the high level and status pieces and styles of performance from YouTube may affect the loss of musical value and its identity, which society and culture have provided. However, in fact, media may also preserve knowledge and its value for society and culture through their performance. Instead of keeping them as secret knowledge and allowing them to disappear through a few people who try to protect the secret knowledge by not playing it, is it better to perform and transfer the knowledge to others to protect it as an existing or living document? The process of learning music traditionally through the relationships between teacher and students and music environment is significant, but that does not mean that learning music through social

media such as YouTube will completely damage the musical value and traditional way of learning. In fact, it helps musicians in their learning process. They can apply media or YouTube, as efficient equipment, to support or broaden their minds through information about several styles of music alongside their traditional way of learning. The more they see and listen to a variety of music, styles and knowledge, the more they understand their own music and its value.

From this point of view, we might consider that digital media or social media at present could be considered to be a close equivalent to a democratic approach, a way of dispersing information and knowledge to everyone in society. In terms of *prachan* music, social media provide an opportunity for musicians to gain knowledge and to broaden their perspectives in competitions by learning and exchanging information. Hence, media change musicians' lives from privately owning and protecting music to sharing and exchanging musical knowledge. This also leads to broadening musicians' experience in the world of social media and establishing their musical creativity in relation to the idea of conceptual fighting at *prachan*.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen how the *prachan piiphaat seephaa* has changed and developed in the modern world. We can see the changes and trends in *prachan* by means of the transformation of musicians' relationships in terms of music schools and public or official institutions, the contracted forms and formats of *prachan* from the standard one and the trends in *prachan* at present through the concept of musical response using different pieces, the expansion of *prachan* pieces in each repertoire, *thao* form, *hua phleeng* and *haang phleeng* pieces in performance, as well as the high-speed performance and the application of the *klong khaek* drums in competitions. It might be said that the development of *prachan* forms and formats in modern society depends on

several factors relating to the change in the context of Thai music. As I have shown, the advent of advanced music technology and the media is a major influence that has changed the concept, sound quality and dynamics, and identity of *prachan*. It has had a significant effect on both the *prachan* process and musicians' and audiences' thoughts about *prachan.* In the next chapter, reflections on *prachan* will be presented to clarify the effects and significances of *prachan* in relation to Thai music and culture.

Chapter 6: Reflections on *Prachan* in Thai Music and Culture

Apart from perceiving the important aspects of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* in conceptual fighting, rehearsals, music lessons and mythology, as well as its modification in modern Thai society, I found that understanding the relationships between *prachan* music and culture is crucially important to contribute to our knowledge of *prachan* and Thai musical society. This is because, in fact, music not only gives value and meaning to itself, but also reveals several significant aspects of human behaviour and culture as part of human life and experience. It might be said that music provides considerable cultural awareness that identifies the characteristics and development of society. As Blacking (1995:223) claims, music is a kind of social action that affects other kinds of social action; it not only represents itself, but also illustrates the 'cultural system' and 'human capability'. In this regard, music or *prachan* can also be seen as a way of demonstrating or reflecting the Thai cultural system and conventions. *Prachan piiphaat seephaa* is well regarded among adept musicians and music masters as the highest intellectual stage of music competition in Thai musical society. Significantly, it reflects the fundamental concept of Thai music and culture and the change in Thai music circles. Hence, in this chapter, I would like to clarify the relationships between *prachan* and culture to broaden a wide spectrum of knowledge in understanding the meaning and significance of *prachan* music. In this chapter, I will explore in depth some of the themes that emerged in the previous chapters to raise significant points about the reflection of *prachan* in Thai music and culture in relation to Thai society. These can be categorised into three sections: the culture of spontaneous response and fighting; *prachan* as a development process of Thai music and society; and changes in *prachan* as society changes.

The Culture of Spontaneous Response and Fighting

Regarding the concept of musical response, it might be said that this concept is viewed as the fundamental knowledge and intuition of most musicians participating in *prachan* performance. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the musical response in *prachan* is not considered to be as simple as a way of responding in music; rather it is a way of conceptual fighting or musical combat in that musicians consider music to be a 'musical weapon' to respond to each other. In other words, they use music as a weapon to challenge and overcome their rival (the other ensemble) in competitions. In *prachan*, musical response works equally as a communicative apparatus that provokes musical conflict between ensembles and music schools, as it is involved with a range of musical and extra musical networks in Thai music circles. Significantly, this concept fundamentally functions with a symbolic cultural meaning in Thai music culture establishing the meaning and significance of music in musicians' perception. Apparently, in *prachan*, musicians respond to each other with music within this concept.

Apart from this, at a deeper level, we might consider that in practice, the ideology of musical response in *prachan* is also associated with the concept of Thai culture. In terms of the cultural aspect, the concept of spontaneous response in performance is also revealed as fundamental in Thai games or plays such as *sugawa* (สักวา), *phleeng chooi* (เพลงฉ่อย), *tangum-ramkyo* (เต้นกำรำเคียว), *like* (ลิเก), *hmau lam klaun* (หมอลำกลอน) and so forth. For example, in the Rattanakosin period, the '*sugawa*' game or poetic game was very popular among royal court (Swangviboonpong 2003:6). This is a game in which each poet attempts to outstrip the other by producing an intelligent spontaneous composition. The first person in the group has to recite a poem and hand it over to the musical ensemble. The rival, then, has to respond with an answering poem immediately after the musical ensemble has ended the song (ibid:6). Likewise, *phleeng chooi* is one the most popular folk plays in the central region of Thailand, representing the way of singing

poetry in response to each other between men and women. It is led by a *phau phleeng* (พ่อเพลง) (a male singer) and a *mae phleeng* (แม่เพลง) (a female singer), and accompanied by the *luuk kuu* (ลูกคู่) or chorus (with each side clapping), and they end their singing sentence with '*cha aee cha cha hnooi mae aoi*' (ชา เอ๋ ฉา ชา หน่อย แม่ เอย). *Phleeng chooi* can be performed in several ways by creating a story that supports the singers to use their artful improvisation of singing poetry to respond to each other. The main context of *phleeng chooi* mostly describes the story of people's lives in a particular culture and the courting between men and women. Arguably, *phleeng chooi* is a way of singers responding intelligently through their spontaneous composition. *Likee* is well recognised as the Thai folk play or popular theatre genre performed both at funerals and auspicious ceremonies in Thai society (Carkin 1984:1). It originally developed from *dikay* or a Muslim chant and was then combined with Thai classical dance and music with modern songs and dialogues improvised by the actors (ibid:2-25 and Rutnin 1996:185-186). *Likee songkhruang* is viewed as the development of *likee* with costumes, music and dance, identifying the culmination of *likee* as a dramatic form. The striking feature of *likee* is that it shows the '*prati phan hwai phrip*'(ปฏิภาณไหวพริบ) or sagacity which means the full use of memory, observation, perception and intuition of the performers in the improvisation of the original dialogue to respond to others in order to control and stay on top of the performance (ibid:204-205). Arguably, the value of showing *prati phan hwai phrip*, as the spontaneous response, to others in *likee* performance attracts rural mass audiences, making *likee* popular in Thai society. Additionally, *hmau lam klaun* is one of the folk plays in north-eastern (Isaan) Thailand. It has a distinctive feature in that stories are sung in response to each other. *Hmau lam klaun* is based on both folk tales and also invented compositions emphasising the significant meaning or theme of the story and the beauty of poetry (Kaungwannakhadii lae Prawattisaat 2521/1978:13). It is mostly performed by a couple of singers (either

man to man or man to woman), who show their skill in singing through responding to questions and answers and courting each other (ibid).

Following the idea of musical response as conceptual fighting in *prachan*, it might be said that the concepts of musical response and 'fighting' in *prachan* are inseparable. In *prachan piiphaat seephaa*, it is very interesting that the concept of musical response or spontaneous response in Thai culture usually comes with the word 'rival' or 'opponent'. This word becomes more and more obvious or intense in the *prachan* competition particularly in the past when *prachan* was greatly esteemed in Thai music society. *Khruu* Pinit Chaisuwan and Samran Kerdphon (Thai National Artist 2540/1997 and 2548/2005) [96] [97] always address the other musical ensemble at *prachan* competition as '*sattruu*' (*ศัตรู*) (enemy) or '*khuu tausuu*' (*คู่ต่อสู้*) (opponent). Furthermore, they usually compare the musical strategy with the strategy in 'fighting' relating to Thai boxing and war. For example, *Khruu* Pinij claimed that, '*prachan* is similar to Thai boxing and we have to know the ability of the other boxer and find the way to reply to him'. Similarly, as *Khruu* Samran claims, 'In *prachan*, we have to find the way to outstrip them (the other ensemble) through the musical response, so the warfare strategy is significant'. It is intriguing how the words 'enemy' and 'fighting' appear in music and how these words in the opinion of Thai musicians are more and more meaningful. Apart from *prachan*, in a cultural aspect, the concept of musical response as a spontaneous response and fighting also appears in Thai games or sports and plays such as *chonkai* (*ชนไก่*) (cock fighting), *khaeng khan waao* (*แข่งขันว่าว*) (kite fighting), *krabii krabaung* (*กระบี่กระบอง*) (stick and staff fighting), *muay thai* (*มวยไทย*) (Thai boxing), *likee* (*ลิเก*) (popular theatre), *khoon* (*โขน*) (masked dance drama) *nangyai* (*หนังใหญ่*) (shadow theatre), and so forth. For instance, *chonkai* or cock fighting is viewed as a traditional sport in Thai culture

[96] Pinit Chaisuwan and Somlan Kerdpon, interview 2012.
[97] Pinit Chaisuwan and Samran Kerdphon are well recognised among Thai musicians as great masters in Thai music having a wide range of knowledge and experience in *prachan*

relating to other South East Asian countries. The *chonkai* game dates back to the Sukhothai (1238-1438) and Ayutthaya period (1350-1767), during which time it was a game of the royal court, disseminated among the people until it became a popular sport in Thai society. *Chonkai* or cock fighting is viewed as a sport related to gambling in which cocks are trained to fight each other to find a winner (Public relations department 1968:27-28). It is normally held in a cockpit, which is always crowded with the cock fighters and people who are fascinated by the conflict in the ring and the great excitement of the environment (ibid:27-29). Likewise, *muay thai* or Thai boxing is viewed as a national sport in Thailand and is well recognised around the world with its distinctive style of fighting or boxing using the feet, elbows and knees, and the style of the *wai khruu* or teacher homage ritual with a Thai music accompaniment, before a fight (ibid:7-9). Historically, *muay thai* is one of the Thai martial arts like *krabii krabaung* (stick and staff fighting) that was used to protect the nation from invasion by foreign countries. *Muay thai*, a national sport, is usually held in a stadium such as Lumpini and Rajdamnern (Bangkok). Two boxers fight in a canvas ring under the control of a referee with judges outside the ring giving the score, surrounded by a crowd of people who enjoy the match (ibid:11).

Regarding the concept of fighting, we might consider that *khoon*, Thai masked play, is another good example reflecting this concept in Thai culture. *Khoon* is a genre of Thai (Siamese) dance drama - developed from the feature of *lakhon nai* (ละครใน) (Court drama) and ballet - which is traditionally performed in the royal court accompanied by narrators and *piiphaat* ensemble. The feature that makes *khoon* different from other Thai dramas is that the narration and dialogue are spoken or recited by others, not by the actors themselves (Yupho 1963:4). *Khoon* has been used since ancient times to represent a story from the Ramakien epic (Siamese or Thai version), based on the Ramayana epic of India which describes the war between Tosakan (or

Ravana), King of Demons of Lonka (Sri Lanka), and Rama, King of Ayodaya (ibid:5). The war begins when Tosakan abducts Sita, Rama's beautiful consort, so Rama has to rescue Sita from Tosakan with the help of his brother Lakshma and an army of monkeys led by Hanuman, the magical and powerful white monkey. The *Khoon* play is part of the Ramakien epic representing the war and conflict between Rama and Tosakan with their armies of monkeys and demons symbolising the fighting between hero and villain and also the triumph of good over evil through the wonderful and formidable dance of *khoon* masked players. The striking feature of the Ramayana epic is that this story and dance drama has been dispersed around South and Southeast Asian countries, but the story and performance varies and there are different versions in different countries that follow their cultural base. In Thailand, Siamese or Thai poets in each period have composed different versions of Ramakien relating to the *khoon* performance, but still based on the main story and theme of conflict and fighting between Rama and Tosakan and other main characters such as Sita, Lakshma, Hanuman, and so forth. *Khoon* is well recognised among Thai people presenting the conflict between Rama and Tosakan with the tricks and strategies in the fighting between their armies alongside the story of love and magic power. Significantly, since the Ramakien epic is full of conflict, *khoon* (masked dance drama), *nangyai* (shadow play), and *wayang* (shadow puppet theatre) in the stories of Bali are all about fighting, and fighting movements form an important basis of dance and drama. Therefore, as mentioned above, the story and concept of conflict, tricks and strategies in fighting can be considered to be a general feature in Thai people's perception.

Likewise, *likee* (Thai folk play or popular theatre), as mentioned previously, also reveals the concept of conflict and fighting through the story of performance. *Likee* mostly features four main characters comprising *tua phra-eek* (ตัวพระเอก) (hero), *tua naang-eek* (ตัวนางเอก) (heroine), *tua koong* (ตัวโกง) (villain) and *tua tahlok* (ตัวตลก)

(comedian) (Virurak 2539/1996:222). The stories used in *likee* are from folk tales or literature such as *Phra Aphaimanii* (*พระอภัยมณี*), *Canthakhorop* (*จันทโครพ*), *Khunchaang Khunphaen* (*ขุนช้างขุนแผน*), *Krai Thaung* (*ไกรทอง*), *Suang Thaung* (*สังข์ทอง*) (Carkin 1984:42-43, 65-66, 215); significantly, these stories reveal the involvement of conflict and fighting between hero and villain with their troops in relation to the story. Apparently, violence - such as fighting for honour, murder, retributive violence and so forth - is the main theme that can be found in *likee*, which can be seen to heighten its dramatic interest (ibid:86). Since there are acts of violence occurring throughout the whole story of *likee*, it is viewed as 'a fairly violent medium of entertainment' (ibid:48). Apart from the story in *likee*, from my fieldwork in *prachan*, the concept of fighting and the word *prachan* as a competition is also revealed in the context of *likee*. Tavee Islankoon-Na-Ayuttaya, an assistant of the Association for Assistance to Friends and Performers, Wat Phra Phireen, claims that the idea of fighting through the concept or sagacity in singing usually happens in the *likee* performance of each troupe. This is because actors like to show off their proficiency and also sometimes during their performance they want to test the skills of others in the same troupe by diverging from the original script or plan. Following the concept of '*prachan likee'* (*ประชันลิเก*) as an intense competition between *likee* troupes, importantly, Udom Yamwiboon,[98] president of the Association for Assistance to Friends and Performers, claims that when a host hires more than one troupe to perform the *likee* together at the same event, the performance of those troupes automatically becomes a *prachan* or intense competition. The adversarial thoughts and unpleasant atmosphere felt by the performers appears in the competition instinctively through the actions and responses of their performances on stage. Udom argued that the concept of competition or performance combat occurs instinctively, since those performers are determined and have strong minds as artists. With this approach in mind,

[98] Udom Yamwiboon, interview, 3/09/2012

it might be said that *likee* and the concept of response and fighting, both in the story and the reality of their performance, are inseparable. Significantly, the term '*prachan*' is also used in *likee* performance when there is more than one *likee* troupe performing at the same event.

One may argue that the concept of spontaneous response or fighting also occurs in certain performances or plays of other cultures around the world such as the Gamelan Beleganjur[99] contest for Bali music (Bakan 1999), *maracatu rural*'s music and dance parade competition in Brazil (Pinto 1996), Rap music in the U.S., Britain's Got Talent and the X Factor (reality television competitions) and so forth, which may be considered to be a general phenomenon of society. Nevertheless, in this aspect, I would argue that even though we can find a similar concept in certain performances of other cultures, in fact, it is not a true parallel, and often, as we see in Thai culture, this concept works as a whole. For instance, in the UK, the Britain's Got Talent and X Factor competitions are not akin to the English football premier league as an intense sporting competition; in the U.S., rap music cannot be compared to American boxing. However, in *prachan* music, as mentioned earlier, we found that the concept of spontaneous response and fighting apparently functions not only in music. Evidently, a similar concept is also revealed in Thai plays, sports or games such as *sugawa* (Thai poetic game)*, phleeng chooi* (Thai popular folk play)*, likee* (Thai popular theatre), *khoon* (Thai masked play), *muay thai* (Thai boxing), *chonkai* (cock fighting)*, krabii krabaung* (Thai stick and staff fighting) and so forth. Furthermore, the striking point is that even though the word '*prachan'* has a significant meaning in Thai music, and is normally defined in terms of an intense music competition, it is not only used in the context of music. In practice, it is also used generally to describe an intense competition event or fighting in plays and games among people in Thai society such as *prachan*

[99] Gamelan Beleganjur is one of the styles of Balinese Gamelan music that has been used to inspire warriors in battle and also provide spiritual power to the Balinese in order to participate in ritual performance.

likee, *prachan khoon*, *prachan hmau lam, prachan piiphaat seephaa* and so forth. With this approach in mind, in fact the ideology of spontaneous response and fighting not only works in music or *prachan piiphaat seephaa*, but also functions efficiently in Thai society as a whole as an ideological connection to Thai culture.

Furthermore, on an in-depth level, I argue that this concept not only works in Thai plays and music in Thai society; rather in practice, it is fundamental in people's everyday lives as it is part of the cultural construction. Following this aspect, we have seen the relationships between spontaneous response, competition and fighting. Hence, we can see that battle plays a central part in Thai culture. Stories from literature and tales, competitions, and the way of intellectual response and challenge in performance are involved and imply a concept of conflict or fighting. Arguably, conflict in terms of response in competitions reflects the fundamental perception and identity of people in Thai society. In terms of music, the way that music is used as a communicative apparatus symbolising the intention to respond to the other also occurs generally in Thai society. For instance, in Thai politics on 13 December 2012, Abhisit Vejjajiva (former Prime Minister of Thailand from 2008-2011), and Suthep Thaugsuban (former Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand from 2008-2011) came to the Department of Special Investigation (DSI) to give testimony regarding the disbandment of the Red Shirt group under their orders (with the death of ninety people), when they were in government in 2010. A number of Red Shirt people and the relatives of the people who passed away during the disbandment assembled angrily in front of the Department of Special Investigation. Before Abhisit and Suthep came into the building of the DSI, the Red Shirt group tried to pressurise them for their testimony by loudly playing the traditional Thai music *Thoranii Kunsaeng* (ธรณีกรรณแสง) (the Crying of Earth), the piece normally used at funerals, symbolising the death of their coming and also doom from their karma. Likewise, in February 2014, before the military coup, the method of establishing

political conflict through music in Thai politics was apparent, when the song '*Khon-loop*' (คนโลภ) (covetous person) with lyrics describing the corruption of politicians in the outstanding rhythmic pattern and melodies of modern Thai folk style[100] was sung by famous Thai singer Yuenyong Opakul - known as 'Aed Carabao' and posted on social media to accompany the political video clip.[101] This video clip was created, and plotted the story with a new name 'Thaksin *Khon-lop*' (ทักษิณคนโลภ)[102] (covetous Thaksin) with pictures of Thaksin Shinawatra - a former Prime Minister - with his son and daughters and his sister Yingluck Shinawatra, who was Prime Minister of Thailand at that time - and the written accusation about Thaksin and his family's corruption with the Pheu Thai political party, which destroyed Thailand as a whole, his dictatorship and betrayal of the Thai Dynasty, and so forth. Apparently, after this video clip was disseminated widely on social media, Yuenyong Opakul was blamed for his conduct by a number of people from the Red Shirt group, who supported Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra. Therefore, Yuenyong announced publicly through the Thai media that he had never sung the song accompanying the video clip. In fact, he had been hired to sing this song ten years earlier, in 2005, for the album *Sum Sao Hngao Haeng* (ซึม เศร้า เหงา แฮ้งค์), but the song had been re-used with a new name. Apparently this video clip was created and posted by the cyber warriors of 'กปปส' or Thai PDRC[103] group, who were opposed to Yingluck Shinawatra and the Pheu Thai party.[104] As mentioned above, we might consider that the Thai people also use music and its symbolic meaning as a weapon to communicate and make psychological attacks on others. Apparently, this concept is the same as *prachan* music, in that music is used by the musicians to communicate with and fight each other, but the situation might be slightly different and complex when music is

[100] Modern Thai folk music is well recognised as *phleeng pheu shewit*
[101] http://www.naewna.com/politic/90863
[102] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-RyJSzKj3Y
[103] PDRC stands for People's Democratic Reform Committee
[104] http://www.manager.co.th/Entertainment/ViewNews.aspx?NewsID=9570000024333

used in order to achieve political conflict. Significantly, the way in which conflict is established through music also functions in general in Thai people's lives and can be applied in different ways and for different purposes.

In short, we noted that the concept of spontaneous response and fighting as conflict not works only in the context of *prachan* and music society, but also functions in Thai plays, games or sports as part of Thai culture. Significantly, as I have mentioned in regard to *prachan* and its reflection of culture, at a deeper level, we might consider that music performance can be seen as a representation of the reality of human life. Victor Turner, in 'From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play' (1982), describes the relationship between theatre and actual life as an act of cultural performance, meaning that in a performance the actor still acts himself, as his own past experience forms part of his play to be 'oneself' (Turner 1982: 107, 117). Turner's idea reveals that in fact we (non-actors) are also acting on the stage of our own lives, which resembles the stage of performance. Arguably, performance represents the knowledge, behaviour and emotions that also relate to the reality of human life. Hence, theatrical acting is closely linked to acting in everyday life in our society. Turning back to *prachan piipaat seephaa*, we might argue that *prachan* music reveals the concept of spontaneous response and fighting as conflict relating to the fundamental concept of Thai culture. Following Turner's theme, it can be said that *prachan* performance and its concept of conflict has parallels with human performance in their everyday lives. Conflict is the cause of *prachan* or Thai music, but this is not merely in the music, it also relates to real life. *Prachan piiphaat seephaa* represents conflict by means of musical response as conceptual fighting among Thai music ensembles. However, in practice, at most *prachan* events, the battle or conflict occurs not only in the music, but also in reality among the musicians and music schools who have utilised music as a weapon to respond to and overcome each other. In other words, musical conflict or

prachan is as a musicians' performance reflecting the reality of their musical life in Thai music society and culture. As mentioned above, a similar concept of conflict or fighting is also revealed in Thai plays, sport or games and even in the game of Thai politics in people's everyday lives as part of Thai culture. We cannot deny that the terms Thai politics and conflict are inseparable in reality. Interestingly, in Thai terminology, the term 'politics' also relates to the word 'play' or '*leen*' (*เล่น*) in the Thai language. When people say that they would like to get into politics or become a politician, they normally say that they would like to '*leen kaan-muang*' (*เล่นการเมือง*) or 'play' with politics. In fact, the term play as performance,[105] or *kaan la-leen* (*การละเล่น*) (play) and *kaan sa-daeng* (*การแสดง*) (performance), functions all around in Thai culture as a whole. It is an interesting aspect that the words 'play' and 'performance' are involved in politics and conflict in Thai society as the reality of people's lives. In regard to this point, we may speculate whether this means that Thai people play the game of politics with conflict, or whether conflict performs a part of Thai politics and people's lives. The truth is that we are living in a world of plays and performances with the involvement of conflict. With this approach in mind, as discussed throughout this section, this also illustrates the fact that conflict performs situation and conflict performs culture. Everything is the cultural rules and everything has conflict. Arguably, conflict is the central part of Thai music and culture and this is revealed in the world of performances of people in their everyday lives. As mentioned previously, the fundamentals of Thai music and culture depend upon the concept of spontaneous response and fighting as conflict. It is the fighting and conflict in terms of competition in plays and games which is associated with the notion of spontaneous response. Apparently, *prachan piiphaat seephaa* reflects musicians' way of life, which

[105] Play is defined as 'the performance of a dramatic composition' (Collins Dictionaries online. *English Dictionary*, http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/play?showCookiePolicy=true)

depends upon the concept of 'conceptual fighting' as musical response and conflict[106] relating to the fundamental concept of Thai culture. This might be significant evidence accounting for music and its reflection of the identity and existence of Thai culture.

Prachan as a Development Process and Creativity of Thai Music and Society

The previous section illustrated the relationships between *prachan* and culture in relation to people's everyday lives representing the notion of conceptual fighting as the concept of spontaneous response and fighting in terms of competition and performance as a whole. In terms of Thai music, *prachan* is by and large viewed as the significant part of the development process and musical creativity of Thai music in relation to Thai society. As for the term creativity, it can be described in several different ways and with different meanings such as an ability to generate new alternatives, to make something new or imaginative, or to radically change or transform something. However, in fact, it also refers to the compounding concept, as Boden claims that the term creativity or new idea can be interpreted by the same fundamental or generative rules as the ordinary ideas of others; it is always associated with the implicit or explicit reference to some specific generative system (Boden 1996:75-79). By and large, in his view, the concept of creativity relates to the combination concept between old/traditional and novel ideas. I would say that in *prachan* music, creativity is perceived as a novel idea that is adapted or developed from old/traditional knowledge to challenge the others making the process of *prachan* more intense and elaborate. Significantly, the concept of musical creativity in *prachan* is also associated with the notion of musical interactions involving internal and external factors, at a particular *prachan* event, such as musicians, musical ensembles, the audience, and the environment (this also relates to the concept of

[106] Anant Narkkong, Thai music scholars, interview 2012.

musical interaction and response as mentioned in Chapter 3). *Prachan* can be explained in terms of the development process and musical creativity of Thai music by means of four paradigms, which are: establishing social gatherings which creates a secular boundary; transmitting musical knowledge; provoking musical conflict; and creating a situation of no formal judgement in the competition.

Prachan is generally viewed as an assembly of musicians and music masters from different music schools, and people from several places. Nowadays, *prachan* are generally held in a Thai Buddhist temple as part of a Thai ceremony, usually funerals or auspicious ceremonies. *Prachan piiphaat seephaa* is generally accepted as the music competition that is part of the wider '*wai khruu*' (ไหว้ครู) or Thai teacher homage ceremony. A *wai khruu* is a significant event in Thai music circles in which musicians or people show respect to their music teachers and are blessed by the gods of music and the arts. It, arguably, is considered to be a significant social gathering in Thai music circles, since it is a great opportunity for musicians to meet and perform music together and to declare themselves to be professional musicians to the general public. Traditionally, musical performance in the wider *wai khruu* ceremony is primarily for showing respect to music teachers and gods of music. However, this concept was developed through the age of *Luang* Pradit Phairau (Sorn Silapabanleng) (1881-1954), a great music master and composer of traditional Thai music in the twentieth century, who was respected and supported by a number of his pupils and musicians in Thailand. In his life time, when he arranged a *wai khruu* ceremony at his house, well known as the Samnak Baan Baht or Baan Baht music school, numbers of his pupils from different provinces in Thailand participated in this event to show respect to him as a great master. Those pupils liked to show their gratitude to *Luang* Pradit Phairau by showing their improvement in music, so they arranged their own *piiphaat* ensembles to perform at the event. As there were many music ensembles among his pupils, and others that would

like to perform at this event, *prachan piiphaat seephaa* was arranged to respond to the requirements of those musicians. Therefore, *prachan* in *wai khruu* at the Baan Baht music school had more than two ensembles performing together at the same event.[107] From this point of view, it might be said that *prachan* in *wai khruu* is not only a way of showing the improvement of pupils in terms of their musical skills in Thai music, but it is also an arena for those pupils to exchange music knowledge. *Luang* Pradit Phairau arranged *prachan piiphaat seephaa* in *wai khruu* ceremony at his house in every year until he passed away. This became the model for *phiiphaat* musicians in later generations. *Wai khruu* ceremonies with *prachan* nowadays are mostly held at Thai Buddhist temples. Wat Phra Phireen (Phra Phireen temple), as mentioned in Chapter 2, is a good example of the most famous *wai khruu* ceremony in Bangkok, gathering a large number of people, both audience and performers, from several schools and institutions. The *prachan* is normally held once a year at this temple with the participation of several famous musicians and music teachers. Apparently, this temple is implicitly considered to be the place of social gatherings of great musicians in Thai music circles who aim to declare themselves to others in public through the *prachan* performance. The way that musicians respond with music by challenging or overcoming each other is the cause of musical creativity among groups of musicians. It might be said that the more intense the *prachan* between music ensembles/schools, the more musical creativity will be revealed. Wat Phra Phireen is considered to be a great *prachan* in Thai music circles, since from the past to the present it has attracted a number of adept musicians, music masters and also talent scouts from different formal institutions who search for great musicians to affiliate to their music departments. According to this, the number of participants at a *prachan* event establishes the *prachan* as more competitive and this makes the musical response or conceptual fighting at the

[107] Sanor Luangsunthorn, Thai National Artist 2555/2012, interview 2013

prachan at this temple highly creative and elaborate. Generally, it is accepted among musicians that the size of the audience and the number of significant people attending a *prachan* will shapes the musicians' performance at the *prachan*. Apparently, the large number of people attending in *wai khruu* and *prachan* in Thai temples means that they can be seen as a social gathering affecting *prachan* and the process of musical creativity at *prachan* performances. Following the concept of *prachan* as social gathering of musical creativity, it might be said that beyond establishing musical creativity through responding with music to each other in intense *prachan*, in practice, musicians also acquire musical ideas and methods from each other through the competition and *prachan* context. Thus it is a way of exchanging and absorbing musical knowledge through the context of the *prachan* social gathering.

The significant feature regarding the relationship between *prachan* and the *wai khruu* ceremony is the representation of *prachan* in the wider *wai khruu* ceremony at Thai temples. It might be said that the *wai khruu* ceremony, which is generally held in a Thai temple, a peaceful and moral place in Thai perception, is viewed as a sacred ritual. Nevertheless, *prachan* is also viewed as a secular performance of fighting through music, with the musicians outdoing, challenging and overcoming each other, establishing conflict between them and the music schools. Moreover, the cheering and shouting, beer and spirits drinking, and cigarette smoking during the competition, which are immoral and considered inappropriate in Thai Buddhist temples, are normally seen in *prachan* as part of the wider *wai khruu* event. As mentioned in Chapter 2 in regard to the *prachan* at the Wat Sriprawat (Sriprawat temple), before *prachan piiphaat seephaa* happened, there was a blessing ceremony from the monks in the pavilion. After the monks had blessed and chanted the Buddhist instruction, they also asked people to chant along and obey the five Buddhist precepts prohibiting killing, stealing, committing adultery, lying, and drinking alcohol. Unexpectedly, when the monks ended

the ceremony and left the pavilion, the musicians turned back to their tables and regaled themselves by drinking several bottles of beer and spirits, and smoking cigarettes while consorting within their group. Interestingly, most musicians also drank beer and spirits before or during the actual *prachan* performance. It seemed that even though the musicians had just accepted the five Buddhist precepts, especially that prohibiting drinking alcohol, they did not apply this to their own behaviour. Apparently, this circumstance is widespread at most *prachan* in the wider *wai khruu* ceremonies in Thai temples.

What we can see from this is that the concept of a sacred ceremony and place such as *wai khruu* in Thai temples contrasts with the *prachan* ideology and environment. *Wai khruu* in Thai temples are viewed as an area of ritual and sacred power, whereas *prachan* is considered to be an area of conflict or fighting and entertainment, an immoral place in the Buddhist concept. In other words, it is the concept of a sacred space and the power of the gods of music and the arts in contrast to the notion of the secular space of human beings. It can be said that the wider *wai khruu* ceremony can be seen as a combination of those sacred and secular worlds. Arguably, the first stage of the *wai khruu* ritual can be seen as the sacred boundary; people arrange the ritual by inviting the gods of music and the arts to come to the event, establishing the sacred power of the area, while *prachan* music is held continually as a secular boundary symbolising human activity or a celebration for the gods by pleasing and entertaining them with *prachan* music in a joyful environment of drinking spirits, cheering and conflict. The way that *prachan* are performed in *wai khruu* is generally claimed among *prahchan* musicians as the way of *bunleeng phleeng* '*thawaai muu*' (*บรรเลงเพลงถวายมือ*) or *prachan piiphaat* '*thawaai muu*' (*ประชันปี่พาทย์ถวายมือ*) ('Offering the Hands' by performing *piiphaat prachan*), which means performing *prachan* to show respect to the teachers or gods of music and the arts. Arguably, the representation of sacred and secular spaces

represents a balance in the *wai khruu* ceremony with the involvement of gods and humans. It might be said that *prachan* creates its own boundary of entertainment through musical conflict and creativity. It implies an area of the secular world in that the musicians and the audience are allowed to avoid the Buddhist precepts even though they are within the sacred area of a Thai temple. It can be seen as a space for releasing emotion in contrast to the ritual or the sacred form in the reality of human life. As *prachan* implies a secular space that gathers a number of musicians and people to an area of entertainment and musical conflict, the musical creativity is created to respond to the requirements of the musicians and audience. Arguably, *prachan* as part of the wider *wai khruu* ceremony is viewed as the representation of humans in a secular space, establishing musical creativity through a social gathering of musicians and the wider audience.

One of the significant features of *prachan* for Thai music circles is supporting the process of learning and transmitting musical knowledge from teachers to pupils. In Thai music culture, the way in which pupils acquire or gain significant musical knowledge from their music master depends upon a long period of learning and serving the music teacher to gain his trust and satisfy him. Technically speaking, it is very difficult for music teachers to teach significant pieces or high level solo pieces to their students until they accept and trust their students' conduct. Pinit Chaisuwan (Thai National Artist 2541/1998), a respected music master, claims that when he was young and wanted to learn pieces from his teacher, he was tested by his teacher and worked for three months harvesting the rice on his rice field; his teacher then started teaching him two musical pieces. Likewise, when he came to Bangkok and wanted to learn music with *Khruu* Phring Dontriirot (1901-1981), one of the famous Thai music masters of the twentieth century, he had to serve *Khruu* Phring and work for him as a musician in his ensemble for many years before *Khruu* Phring trusted and taught him the high level solo pieces

for *ranaat eek*. Arguably, the reason why it has been difficult to gain musical knowledge from a music teacher, particularly in the past, is due to the high level of competition between musicians and music schools, relating to their employment and status as professional musicians in Thai society. With this in mind, it can be said that acquiring good musical skills and knowledge relates to the fame and economic well-being of musicians. For this reason, the process of protecting musical knowledge from others is established as a way of protecting musicians' way of life. Significantly, this kind of ideology still occurs in Thai musical society, even though traditional Thai music at present is less popular than it was in the past. Hence, this kind of notion fundamentally results in a difficulty in passing on Thai musical knowledge from teacher to pupils or one generation to another, which in turn affects the manner of Thai music development.

As for *prachan*, it might be said that *prachan* is opposed to the previous ideology by supporting the notion of transmitting musical ideas and creativity from teacher to pupils. This is because *prachan* is a process of musicians expressing and representing their musical proficiency and knowledge to others. Since *prachan,* particularly *prachan piiphaat seephaa*, is viewed as an intense music competition and a significant event in Thai music circles, it is a great opportunity for all music masters and adept musicians to show their musical competence and knowledge to others in public. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, *prachan* is also viewed as the transition stage of a musical ensemble and musicians from a general ensemble to a *prachan* ensemble or from normal musicians to professional musicians. Therefore, in order to participate and overcome the other at *prachan*, a music teacher normally trains his pupils seriously in the ensemble to be ready for this intense competition. In the process of training musicians for *prachan*, music teachers mostly provide their pupils with unique musical techniques, new musical arrangements, and special musical knowledge, which is quite

different from the general lessons that musicians have with their teachers. Apparently, some secret musical pieces - such as high level solo pieces - and knowledge are also revealed in this process as a way of developing musicians' musical skills and responding to the others at *prachan*. It might be said that *prachan* affects the process of pupils learning music from their teacher to his satisfaction. By and large, it can be said that the reason why a music teacher provides special music knowledge to his pupils at *prachan*, particularly *prachan piiphatt seephaa*, is to protect his fame and that of his music school, and also to declare the fame of his ensemble to the public as a great *prachan* ensemble. Apparently, the result of performances at *prachan* events automatically affect the economic status of those participant musicians and music schools in Thai music circles. As mentioned above, it can be said that *prachan* implements the transmission process of Thai musical knowledge from music teacher to students. To put it at a deeper level, *prachan* in practice is not simply a way of passing on old or traditional knowledge from teacher to students, it also supports a way of transmitting musical creativity from teacher to students. In practice, *prachan* functions as an activated apparatus forcing musicians from different music ensembles to create their own musical techniques, pieces and styles to respond to each other. With *prachan* performance, the pupils/musicians will learn traditional musical knowledge with a new concept in terms of musical strategies, techniques and arrangements from their music teacher. In other words, *prachan* is also viewed as the transmission process of musical creativity. Through this process, pupils/musicians are able to preserve the inherent knowledge and learn how to be creative in music to develop their musical competence and knowledge as a whole.

Focusing on *prachan* and musical conflict, it can be said that *prachan* as a process of provoking musical conflict relates to the concept of musical creativity and development in Thai music. As stated previously, the ways of responding musically in

prachan are quite varied. Arguably, these are ways of musical response that can be explained in terms of conceptual fighting. The process and methods of performing *prachan* represent the way in which musical combat takes place between musicians and music ensembles. Apparently, the musical response conceptualises *prachan* ideas and provokes adversarial thoughts between musicians and ensembles until it becomes musical conflict. This musical conflict automatically activates and shapes the way in which musicians' think about their musical creativity in order to respond to the other again and again. This illustrates the relationships between musical conflict and musical creativity in Thai music. Musical response and conflict in *prachan* is revealed through *haang phleeng*. It might be said that out of all of the response methods, *haang phleeng* (หางเพลง) is viewed as a significant feature of musical response in present *prachan* representing the development in *prachan* music. In *prachan*, *haang phleeng* is viewed as an efficient way of responding to and challenging musically as a way of conceptual fighting. As mentioned in Chapter 5, *haang phleeng* is considered to be a significant part in present *prachan*; most *prachan* musicians consider it an important musical piece that is usually performed after the main piece to show their musical ideas as a way of communicating with and challenging the other. Broadly speaking, in the concept of *prachan* at present, performing *haang phleeng* is a way of responding to musical meaning provoking musical conflict. Intriguingly, in *prachan*, musicians try to create new small compositions, musical arrangements and solo sections in the course of *haang phleeng* to communicate with each other, for instance, at the *prachan* at Wat Sriprawat between the Ang Thong College of Dramatic Arts and the Kunchaun Duriya ensembles and at the *prachan* at Wat Phra Phireen between Sit-Reungnond and Saue Banlengsin (see Chapter 3). It might be said that the way of musical response, as musical conflict, supports the way of creating musical meaning in *prachan*.

Evidently, musicians nowadays use *haang phleeng* to respond to each other as a way of musical combat. In Thai music history, *haang phleeng* was originally introduced from the small traditional pieces, *phleeng ruang* (เพลงเรื่อง) or *phleeng phaasaa* (เพลงภาษา), that musicians used to support the main piece in order to be more stimulating. It was then developed by a number of famous music masters in different variations, dialects and styles with popular pieces from Thai musical society in each age, as explained in Chapter 5. Thus, *haang phleeng,* by and large, can be explained as the notion of musical creativity in *prachan*. As shown at the performance of Sit-Reungnond and others ensembles at the *prachan* in my fieldwork at Wat Phra Phireen, with their new *haang phleeng* piece with phrases of the melody of modern Thai folk song, this proves that the concept of *haang phleeng* with communication is not considered to be as simple as the musical pieces used to respond to each other. Critically, *haang phleeng* is a combination of traditional knowledge and the new or current style of music that is recognised and popular among people in Thai society. Implicitly, it can be seen as a combination of past and present representing the existence of music from different times in the same space, denoting the development of musical knowledge. It might be said that *haang phleeng* represents the way in which music has been developed and responds to the requirements of the audience in Thai music society. Hence, *haang phleeng* represents the development of *prachan* through the way of responding musically or provoking conflict, and this illustrates the relationship between musical combat and musical creativity. *Haang pheeng* relates to the idea of conceptual fighting in *prachan*, reflecting the fact that musical conflict is the cause of musical creativity. Consequently, *prachan* plays a key role in creativity in Thai music. With this approach in mind, if we consider that *prachan* is the process of provoking musical conflict, we can also say that musical conflict is the cause of musical creativity. In other words, conflict delivers creativity.

Another aspect that must be borne in mind is the fact that *prachan* gives rise to the concept of musical creativity and the development of Thai music. Here, I would like to clarify the concept and condition of *prachan* music through my experience at *prachan*, leading to understanding how *prachan* music is processed in terms of music competition and how it relates to the term musical creativity. As mentioned at the beginning of this research, the distinctive feature of *prachan* or *prachan piiphaat seephaa* is that there is no judgement by a jury or declaration of a winner. This *prachan* condition is viewed as the phenomenon of *prachan* music in Thai culture which most musicians perceive as the basic feature of Thai music competition. However, in fact, this implies core knowledge of *prachan* performance which gives rise to the development of *prachan* music in Thai music circles as a whole. Significantly, this might be a crucial aspect revealing in depth the concept of conceptual fighting in *prachan*.

Through my experience as a *piiphaat* musician and my fieldwork at *prachan* in 2012-13, when I participated in several *prachan* events, experiencing the response of *prachan* musicians who tried to claim themselves to be the winners, I started asking myself how musicians know that they are the winner or loser without a formal judgment? How do musicians perceive that they are playing better than the other as they respond with music to each other in different pieces, versions and styles? Is it possible that each *prachan* ensemble or music school has their own musical preferences in terms of the style, speed, technique, and sound quality? These questions made me realise that in fact the notion of a judgment or declaration of a winner cannot be applied to the process and context of *prachan*, even though it is viewed in terms of a music competition. This is because in practice we cannot judge who is the winner in *prachan* competitions because of the variety of musical styles, techniques and pieces. The most important thing is that these music ensembles/music schools have their own preferences in terms of music; in

practice, each ensemble has its own distinctive features in regard to the style their musical performing. Historically, there were some *prachan* events, there were some events that tried to apply the concept of a formal judgment by a jury. For instance, a significant *prachan* at Baang Khunphrom palace in the reign of King Rama VI called '*ngaan sii maseng*' in 1923, as mentioned in Chapter 5, was a *prachan* between three palace ensembles: the Baang Khunphrom, the Burapa palace, and the *Cao Phraya* Dhamaadhikaranaadhibadii. These ensembles were led by three highly respected Thai music masters, *Caangwaang* Thua Paathayakoosol, *Caangwaang* Sorn Silapabanleng, [108] and *Phraya* Sanau Duriyaang (Princess Siriratbusabong and Amatayakul 2524/1981:49). This was an intense *prachan piiphaat seephaa* with the original *prachan* concept of playing the same musical pieces alternately in a set order, but with different versions, orchestrations and styles. At that time, the result of the *prachan* was that the ensemble category Baang Khunphrom won the first prize of 120 Baht, *Cao Phraya* Dhamaadhikaranaadhibadii won the second prize of 100 Baht, and Burapa palace won the third prize of 80 Baht, while in the singing category, the Baang Khunphrom (by Team Kranleard), Burapa palace (by Bunleeng Saglick), and *Cao Phraya* Dhamaadhikaranaadhibadii ensembles (by Chalearn Sunthornwathin) won the first, second, and third prizes respectively (ibid:50-51). The result of this *prachan* was given by a panel of judges comprising music specialists and royal service officers (Phoasavadi 2005:89). However, even though the result of the competition was formally accepted by the jury and the royal residence of Prince Boripatra, who organised this event, it was disputed and not accepted by the musicians and music masters of other participant palace ensembles.[109] Apparently, this affected later *prachan* events among palaces as they were then held without any formal judgment being given. Likewise, in 1975, there was a famous *prachan* at Wat Phra Phireen with a formal judgment

[108] *Caangwaang* Sorn Silapabanleng was promoted to Luang Pradit Phairau (Sorn Silapabanleng) in 2468/1925 in the reign of King Rama VI (1880-1925).
[109] Poonpit Amatayakul, Professor emeritus and Thai music scholar, interview 2012.

arranged by the Association for Assistance to Friends and Performers (known as *Samakom-Songkroe-Sahaaysilpin*), led by Prof. Dr. Utit Narksawat, It was a great *prachan piiphaat seephaa* between two renowned ensembles, the Pluuam-priichaa and Hualamphong ensembles (see Chapter 3). Evidently, the *prachan* between these two famous ensembles was very intense and too close to call, but at the end, the Pluuam-priichaa ensemble was declared the winner. However, even though the result of the *prachan* was judged by a group of famous Thai music masters, it was not accepted by the musicians of the Hualamphong ensemble or the audience. This is because those two ensembles' performance were too close to call at that competition and also someone disputed the fairness of the judgement, since the majority of the jury at that *prachan* were from the Fine Arts Department of Thailand, who were working in the same institution as the musicians of the Pluuam-priichaa ensemble.[110] This gave rise to dissatisfaction among the musicians of the Hualamphong ensemble and also established conflict between the two ensembles. Evidently, the result of this *prachan* became controversial among Thai music circles in terms of whether the judgment was correct. This led to the *prachan* at Wat Phra Phireen and other *prachan* in different places later being held without any formal judgment.

As mentioned above, we can see that the concept of a formal judgment does not play a part in the concept and context of *prachan* in Thai culture. The question that is raised is how someone could judge or find a winner from the variety and the complexity of *prachan* performance. In particular, how could a small group of people (or a jury), such as five or six people who might be considered to be music masters or Thai music specialists, who have different views in *prachan* or preferences in *prachan* style and knowledge, be relied upon to judge the competition? Were someone to try to judge or declare a winner at *prachan*, there would be many questions from the musicians and

[110] Asst. Prof. Dr. Surapon Chantharapat, Kasetsart University, interview, 19/04/2013.

audience about the justness or fairness of the process and the criteria for the judgment among the various versions and styles of performance. The fact is that each musical ensemble has its own preference in musical style, technique and strategy for performance, so it is impossible for a jury to find a winner from the variety and complexity of their performances without any subjectivity or preference in terms of music. Generally speaking, even in general music competitions around the world, there is controversy about the formal judgment of a jury who claim to be music masters or music specialists, who always judge others and make comments about who is better. This is because, in fact, their judgment does not really prove the value or musical competence of the musicians or participants in reality since music is an art that depends upon individual experience and preference. Hence, this might be a significant reason why *prachan* use the reaction of the audience as an indirect judgment to signify the winner. It is very rare to find *prachan piiphaat seephaa* with a panel of judges or formal judgment in Thai music circles. It seems that Thai musicians do not want to have a formal judgment in *prachan*, since that might cause an argument about who is the winner and who is the loser, establishing discontentment and destroying the relationships between musicians and music schools.

To put it another way, is it possible to say that the process of *prachan* with its condition of avoiding a formal judgment is the cause of musical creativity and the development of *prachan* music as a whole? In-depth knowledge, the reason why *prachan* is traditionally held without any formal judgment or declaration of a winner, relates to the *prachan* cultural condition of musical response in music society. Arguably, the reason why *prachan* does not have a formal judgment is because if *prachan* were to have one that would mean that the condition of *prachan* between ensembles would be over. In other words, the process of *prachan* between music ensembles/schools would end with the declaration of a winner and a loser in the eyes of the public in Thai musical

society. Hence, musicians would not need to compete with each other again, since the result would already have been declared in public and the musicians would feel pride or embarrassment as the winner or loser of the competition. Nevertheless, since *prachan* is, in fact, a competition without a formal judgement, the musicians of each ensemble still have an opportunity to perform in a return match at the next *prachan* event. This is because the result of the competition is not formally judged and declared in public. Therefore, musicians still have a chance to improve and develop their performance again for the next performance. Hence, at the following event, the musicians who lost or thought that they could not play better than or as well as the other in terms of some musical techniques or methods at the previous event have a chance to develop their musical competence and knowledge, and create some musical arrangements and techniques, and a musical strategy to respond to the other at the next *prachan* event. Vice versa, if the ensemble who won or performed better than the other at the previous event, but could not respond to or failed to perform better than the other at a later *prachan*, they would still have an opportunity at future events again and again to improve their performance to a higher level, creating and orchestrating their performance methods and techniques for competition. So, *prachan* between music ensembles with the concept of conceptual fighting can re-arrange *prachan* as a return match again and again due to the *prachan* condition. This means that *prachan* performances between ensembles/music schools continue for their whole of their lifetime in Thai music circles. Apparently, the conceptual fighting also develops each time in their return match of *prachan* as their way of musical creativity. This is a significant reason why the *prachan* culture originally did not include a formal judgment in the process of competition, since that would destroy the method of musical response and musical creativity in Thai music culture. For this reason, most *prachan* musicians consider that the result of *prachan* can be perceived only by the musicians themselves

and the response from the audience. As for the audience, as I mentioned in Chapter 3, their response is viewed as one of the major aspects of musical combat by arousing musicians' adversary thoughts during *prachan*, but, indeed, the involvement of the audience in *prachan* is a crucial aspect of the *prachan* process, and is also viewed as part of the *prachan* condition. Since *prachan* is a competitive process without a panel of judges, the audience is automatically considered to be an informal judge. Musicians consider the expression of the audience with their clapping, shouting, and actions, to be an indirect judgement, demonstrating their preferred performance or ensemble. For this reason, most music ensembles also take the audience's response into consideration as a judgement implying who is the winner in the competition. Musicians try to gain the votes of the audience, by appreciating them with their creative performance in terms of new compositions, musical techniques, styles and meanings that are understandable and communicable. As mentioned above, it might be said that the audience also relates to the concept of musical response as a significant factor in making a condition of creating and responding to musical pieces at *prachan*. The way to be recognised as the 'winner' or as a great *prachan* ensemble is not only by overcoming the rival ensemble, but also by becoming more communicative and winning the hearts of the audience. In other words, at *prachan* performance, apart from finding a way to respond to each other in competition, the musicians also have to develop their music and performance creatively to the audience's satisfaction. Undoubtedly, the audience is a vital part of the *prachan* context; they are viewed as an indirect judgement, influencing the way in which the musicians think about their performance and musical creativity at *prachan*.

In short, I have presented the four aspects of *prachan* involved with the development process and musical creativity of Thai music and society. They comprise of establishing a social gathering, creating a secular boundary in relation to the *wai khruu* ceremony; transmitting musical knowledge from music teacher to pupils;

provoking musical conflict through the way of communication, particularly through *haang phleeng*; as well as creating a situation of no formal judgement in the competition. From these aspects, I would argue that *prachan* plays a key role in the development process of Thai music and society as a whole. By and large, *prachan* music is considered among musicians and scholars to be a way of developing musical skills and knowledge that are generally viewed as part of Thai music culture. We cannot deny that in Thai music history, new ideas in terms of musical techniques and methods of performance mostly come from creativity at *prachan* events. This is because the process and concept of *prachan* as conceptual fighting supports the notion of musical creativity and the development of musical performance. There is no doubt that *prachan* shapes musicians' thoughts in Thai music circles as a whole, as mentioned in Chapter 3. That is because the musical techniques, strategies and knowledge that are created or appear at *prachan* usually generate Thai music or *piiphaat* music performance in general through the musicians and audience participating in the *prachan* as the new creativity and popular model that becomes highly esteemed in Thai music circles. This proves that in Thai music circles, *prachan* is not viewed as a general music competition, but is significant as the musicians' way of life and a major factor in the development of Thai music.

Change in *Prachan* as Society Changes?

The significance of the concept and process of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* in Thai music relates to the change and development of *prachan* from the past to the present. However, in practice, *prachan* not only elucidates the development of the concept and form of music itself, but also illustrates the wider picture of change in Thai society and culture. In other words, the change in *prachan* is associated with the change and development of Thai society. In this section, I would like to explore the relationships between *prachan*

and society from the past to the present through the trend, economics and expansion of Thai institutions. Then, I will relate the contracted form and musical style of present-day *prachan* to the contraction of space and time in modern Thai society.

Historically, from the reign of King Rama IV (1851-1868) to that of King Rama VII (1925-1935), *prachan piiphaat seephaa* was created and took place in a palace as a game or entertainment for noblemen. Hence, by and large, we can say that at that time musicians and *prachan* were supported by a dynasty under the patronage system related to the system of absolute monarchy. Then, after the abolition of absolute monarchy in Thailand in 2475/1932, the form of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* was disseminated publicly and became highly popular among musicians and people as a form of musical entertainment relating to their way of life. In 1942, *Luang* Pradit Phairau (Sorn Silapabanleng) (1881-1954) composed a Thai musical piece '*Saen Khamnung* (*thao*)', introducing a new style of composition with *hua phleeng* (introduction) and *haang pheeng* in the western dialect in marching style. Evidently, he composed this piece to express his distress and anger with the Thai government about Thai cultural policy, known as 'Cultural mandates' (1939-1942),[111] which prohibited the playing of Thai music in public (Krom Silpakorn, National Achieves of Thailand 2486/1943 cited in Siriphong 2537/1994:112-113).[112] Significantly, the *hua phleeng* and *haang pheeng* pieces then became a new trend in *prachan*. After World War II, the constant influx of western and foreign culture and music such as rock, jazz and pop affected the concept of *prachan*, as some *prachan* pieces and performances were adjusted and developed in a new style with a modern *haang phleeng* to respond to the audience's new tastes. *Haang phleeng* was later developed with a foreign dialect in Thai music as a way of

[111] Thai cultural mandate (1939-1943) was Thai National policy (by means of the concept of civilisation) under the government of Field Marshal Plaek Pibulsonggram (1938-1944)

[112] This cultural policy restricted Thai music performance in general, requiring permission from the government each time to perform music at a particular event.

communicating and challenging in *prachan*, a style that is highly popular and still used today.

We cannot deny that after the crisis in the Asian financial economy 'Tom Yum Goong' in 1997 and the advent of audio technology such as tapes and CDs (as mentioned in Chapter 5), fewer people wanted to employ *piiphaat* ensembles to accompany ceremonies, or even for *prachan*. Arguably, this affected the Thai economy and the existence of several Thai music schools. The expansion of institutions in Thai society needing teachers gave music masters and adept musicians an opportunity to survive and work with their music by teaching music in universities or state schools. As most musicians are not able to live just by performing *prachan* or Thai music as before, they have to be affiliated to a department of music as a music teacher. This illustrates the power of institutions in Thai music in modern society, which evidently has caused the change in the traditional musical teaching system from the music school system to the institutional system. This has also changed the close relationships between teacher and students as father and children, and the way of transmitting musical knowledge between teacher and pupils in relation to the way of understanding and learning *prachan* music. In Chapter 5, I gave an example of an annual *prachan* between official institutions, called the *prachan* 11th *Piiphaat Seephaa*-tii-Wang Naa, which identifies the power of an official institution that tried to establish a standard form of *prachan piiphaat seephaa*, contributing to the process of standardisation by arranging an annual *prachan* competition. This also reflects that musicians' relationships in Thai music circles and *prachan piiphatt seephaa* at present do not depend upon music schools, but focus very much on institutions. It seems that institutions have become more influential in centralising music, *prachan* and the educational system. Additionally, from the movement and change in *prachan* in relation to Thai society, we can see that this also illustrates the change in *prachan* and Thai music support from the past to the present in

Thai society by means of the patronage system (the dynasty), the social system (the people and musicians themselves), and the Thai institutional system. As stated previously, we can see the general picture of the relationships between *prachan* and society, which means we can say that the movement of *prachan* and society has run in parallel. Significantly, this represents the strong relationships between music and society, which are linked as the notion of change and development. This is particularly obvious in the context of *prachan* music.

Another aspect of the connection between *prachan* and society that must be borne in mind is the fact that the change in *prachan* musical form and style reflects the change in society and culture. The question is, how does the *prachan* format and musical style represent Thai society and culture? It can be said that the contracted form and change in *prachan* style relates to the contraction of space and time in modern Thai society. Following this aspect, the fundamental concept of *prachan* was originally intended to test and prove musicians' musical competence and knowledge in the competition over a long period of time – a whole night – through the different levels of musical pieces from the *seephaa* repertoire, following the standard format of *prachan piiphaat seephaa.* However, the truth is that this concept cannot be applied to the present context of *prachan*. In Chapter 5, I illustrated the *prachan piiphaat seephaa* format from the standard to its present format. Significantly, the musical format that most musicians use in *prachan phiiphaat seephaa* at present has evidently contracted from the standard one. Nowadays, in *prachan piiphaat seephaa*, musicians mostly focus on three musical pieces from three major repertoires, comprising *probkai* (ปรบไก่), *tayoe* (ทยอย) and *diaw* (เดี่ยว). The contracted form of *prachan* pieces at present represents a change in the original concept of *prachan* that traditionally required a musical response between ensembles through a number of pieces from *prachan* repertoires. Hence, I argue that the contracted form and format of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* at present relates to the change

in Thai society and its condition in the modern world. It relates to the contracted form of time and space in modern Thai society. It can be said that modern Thai society follows the way of urban life and culture in which people have fewer relationships and less communication with each other, are economically competitive, and own and occupy time and space privately for their own individual activities. This illustrates the notion of individualism with the restriction of time and space in modern society. This concept differs from the traditional or rural life where people had more communication and interactions and generally shared a larger space and time together for communal activities. Thus, the change from traditional or rural life to urban life and culture in modern Thai society has involved the contracted form of time and space. Significantly, this has also affected the process and form of *prachan* at present.

Following this line of thought, the effect of the time-space contraction in modernity is apparently revealed in the context of *prachan* and *wai khruu* or the teacher homage ceremony. I found that nowadays *prachan* and *wai khruu* ceremonies are mostly held at Thai temples rather than in the private houses of musicians or hosts, since the temples are viewed as places of social gathering, which provide a large space for these events and the number of participants involved. In modern Thai society, most musicians do not have wealth and sponsors as in the past, so they do not own a large area or even have enough space to arrange *prachan* in their own houses as in the past. In modern Thai society, the time people have for living and activities is mostly dedicated to the individual rather than the public. Hence, even though *prachan* is held at a Thai temple, the process cannot function properly in competition. This is because musicians have to be considerate to others; they have to restrict the duration of each *prachan* event to a specific period of time to avoid disturbing the neighbours in the area with the sound and volume of the *prachan* music. This is because most people nowadays are more concerned about their own time and space in urban life and do not appreciate and

consider Thai music or *prachan* to be part of their life as in the past. As mentioned above, we can say that the condition of space and time in modern society has resulted in the contracted form of *prachan* format at present.

In this aspect, the *prachan* at Wat Phra Phireen and Wat Sriprawat, two famous *prachan* in Thai temples, are good examples of this aspect from my fieldwork in 2012-13. The *prachan* at Wat Phra Phireen and Wat Sriprawat nowadays are restricted to only two or three musical pieces by each ensemble in competition, since, in practice, the musicians do not have time to perform all of the musical pieces from the *seephaa* repertoires that were traditionally used. In some years of *prachan* at these temples, the host has had to cancel the solo repertoire in order to ensure time for the performance of all of the ensembles. The issue of time restriction in performance seemingly appeared at the *prachan* at Wat Sriprawat. Intriguingly, this happened after the musicians had performed *prachan* for the whole night. The musicians were performing *prachan* pieces from the *tayoe* repertoire and the audience were enjoying listening to the musical response between the two ensembles. However, the host of this event had to end the competition immediately without any regard for the audience's and musicians' requirements at the *prachan*. This was because the host had asked for permission from the monks in the temple and people around the area to have a *prachan* event for only one night. He had to terminate the event since it was almost six o'clock in the morning, and he had to be considerate towards the neighbour around the temple. Apparently, this is very different from the past, when *prachan* was generally accepted and could be held for long periods of time until late morning, or even for two or three days to complete the whole process or repertoires. As mentioned above, we can see that the contraction of time and space in modern Thai society and culture is related to the contracted form and process of *prachan* at present. It might be said that the concept and form of the present *prachan* represents the change in Thai society in the modern world. Significantly, it

represents the concept of people's lives and culture at present, which have become restricted and contracted within a framework of owning their space and time privately rather than publicly, as was the case in Thai culture in the past. The contracted form of *prachan* significantly has become a major concern among adept musicians and music masters. They fear the loss of the standard and quality of performance because the process of *prachan* is restricted and musicians are not allowed to perform *prachan* properly.

The concept of modernity and its condition of time is also revealed in the *prachan* musical style at present. At the beginning of this section, I mentioned the influence of western or foreign cultures and music such as rock, jazz, and popular music on the change in the style of *haang phleeng,* as the modern *haang phleeng* represents the change in *prachan* at present in modern Thai society. Indeed, one of the significant features of the change or present-day trend in *prachan* is the way of showing '*khwaam hwai*' (ความไหว) (known as *hwai*) or a high speed in performance. As mentioned in Chapter 5, it is accepted amongst music masters and scholars that this trend has become popular particularly among *prachan* musicians of the new generation. Ostensibly, speed has become the main factor in responding and showing the musical competence of each ensemble at *prachan* at present. This concept has been generalised among present *prachan* musicians, which has made them focus very much on how to train their ensemble to perform more rapidly than other ensembles as the way of showing their power and musical competence in competitions.

Generally speaking, the trend in *prachan* for competing with speed represents the concept of time in modern society. It can be said that the concept of modernity relates to the way of owning and spending time (wisely) in everyday life. In modern Thai society and urban life people tend to organise their time for living and mostly spend everyday of their lives in a hurry, following the demands of urban life to be on time, and to work

efficiently within a specific period of time. They have to speed up their learning and capability to do their work or activity under the condition of the time restriction and to save their time for other activities. The concept of fast food such as McDonald's, KFC, and Burger King is a good example of people's lives and their time restriction in modern Thai society. It is viewed as a symbol of modernity in relation to 'speed' in their eating behaviour – as in eating (fast) food - or spending less time eating, leaving more time for work. Arguably, the concept of speed and time in modern society is also revealed in the concept of competing in education, work and business. Seemingly, in terms of business and education, the way of getting access to and acquiring information faster than others, e.g. through advanced technology or media, results in benefit and advantages in terms of economics and education. Hence, people's everyday lives are apparently viewed as a competition with time and speed.

Turning back to the trend of showing a high speed at *prachan* performances, this responds to this concept of modernity, competing with each other under the condition of a time restriction. The trend in *prachan* of high speed also relates to the contracted form of the *prachan* format as a way to test and prove the musicians' proficiency within this time restriction. Since *prachan* musicians have a time limit to respond to each other with their music and to prove who is better in the competition, the speed of the performance becomes the main factor to prove the musicians' musical competence in a specific period of time during the *prachan*. Implicitly, speed or playing at a high speed at *prachan* is viewed as power, signalling who is better in the competition. Obviously, this is different from the traditional concept when *prachan* was mostly held for long hours or a whole night, and all of the musical pieces were performed as a way of proving musicians' proficiency. Significantly, this represents the notion of speed in the concept of time and space in urban life and culture in modern Thai society. One of the significant reasons why musicians focus on performing *prachan* at high speed is

because speed is viewed as obvious evidence of the judgement in the audience's and musicians' perception to identify who is the winner in the competition. Critically, with the present trend in *prachan* in regard to speed, there are many music masters and adept musicians who are concerned about the quality of *prachan* music. This is because *prachan* musicians at present focus very much on performing music at high speed, but are less concerned about the traditional concept of *prachan* with its quality of sound and melodies in performance. This can be viewed as the way of living in accordance with the contraction of time and space in modern Thai society. Evidently, the trend of applying 'speed' as a central part in *prachan* reflects the musicians' and people's way of life in modern Thai society and culture with the contraction of time and space influencing the way in which people think about their lives and music.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen how *prachan* and its significance reflects on Thai music and culture. We have suggested that the concept of musical response and conflict in *prachan* is embedded as a model in the broad concept of Thai music and culture by means of Thai plays, games or sports and politics as in people's everyday lives. We have also noted that *prachan* plays a significant part in the development process of Thai music and society by means of four paradigms: establishing social gatherings which creates a secular boundary; transmitting musical knowledge; provoking musical conflict; and creating a situation of no formal judgement in the competition. Lastly, this chapter ended by exploring the relationships between *prachan* music and culture in relation to Thai society through change and movement and the concept of the contraction of time and space in modern Thai society.

Chapter 7: Conclusion: Music, Conflict, and Creativity

In this chapter I shall present an overview and summary of the core themes of this research that bind together my ideas about the conceptual fighting and conflict in *prachan piiphaat seephaa* and its representation of Thai music and culture. As mentioned in the previous chapters, the notion of conceptual fighting and conflict represents how *prachan* competition is constructed and functions in Thai music circles. This involves a range of musical and extra musical networks, which make *prachan* an intense and significant music competition that is perceived as a form of general musical knowledge in Thai music circles. I do not pretend to claim that *prachan* and the notion of conceptual fighting represents the whole of Thai music performance, but I view it as a fundamental concept that is psychologically embedded in Thai music and culture. I hope it is clear that *prachan* music displays remarkable fruitfulness in its significance and function in Thai music circles, revealing the fundamental concepts and changes of music in relation to the development of modern Thai society and culture. This evidence identifies that *prachan* is fully integrated within the historical, social and cultural domains.

Prachan illustrates so many things about Thai music, society and culture. It is viewed as a musical model, in that we can explore its concept, function and development in society, leading to the understanding of different aspects of Thai music and culture. I have introduced *prachan piiphaat seephaa* as the main traditional stage competition in Thai music circles that is predicated on the concept of musical interaction and response, requiring musicians to have the musical competence and knowledge to respond to each other with music on stage. The term conceptual fighting clarifies the concept and process of *prachan* as the way in which the musicians compete to respond to, challenge, and defeat each other in terms of musical ideas and concepts -

as a ‘musical weapon’ - through musical pieces, musical strategies, musical techniques (such as *khayii, sabut, rao, kwaat, kwaai muu*), sound quality and dynamics, and a high speed. Significantly, this concept in *prachan* also involves a range of musical and extra musical networks, which arouses the musical conflict in *prachan*, contributing to the conflict in reality between the musicians and music schools in Thai music circles. *Prachan* is viewed as a musical interaction and response in regard to ‘conceptual fighting’ and ‘conflict’.

Prachan, evidently, is not simply a way of responding to each other with musical ideas, it is a process of communication between musicians through the ‘symbolic meaning’ of music. In Chapter 3, the concept of ‘symbolic cultural meaning’ was applied to clarify the way in which musicians respond to each other in *prachan*. In *prachan*, musicians mostly use music or pieces of music as musical messages to challenge and defeat each other. Therefore, understanding the symbolic cultural meaning of these pieces is essential in order to perceive and communicate in *prachan* effectively and successfully. My fieldwork at four main *prachan* events, for instance, demonstrates the role of conceptual fighting through the way in which the musicians communicate with each other mostly through the *hua phleeng*, *haang phleeng* and *diaw* (solo) pieces with musical techniques, sounds, and a high speed. Significantly, the pieces that the musicians choose to perform in *prachan* are loaded with symbolic cultural meaning that is shared by the musicians and audience in Thai musical culture. In *prachan*, symbolic meaning also draws from relationships with other performance contexts, especially theatre and rituals. Implicitly, the concept of conceptual fighting in *prachan* is generally viewed as the process of testing the musicians’ intelligence in Thai music. This reveals that the conceptual fighting or musical conflict in *prachan* is the procedure of communicating, creating and developing the meaning of musical pieces, melodies embedded in Thai music circles and culture. Furthermore, the notion of

conceptual fighting in *prachan* can be explained as an 'interactive conceptualisation', one of the four interactive approaches in the framework of musical interaction and response, comprising interactive collaboration, interactive conceptualisation, interactive audience, and interactive environments. I have introduced my framework in this research to clarify the process and identity of *prachan* in that it not only relies on the musical response between musicians or ensembles, but also on the cooperative network and interactions with others at a *prachan* event.

Seemingly, *prachan* in modern Thai society sheds light on the modification of the *prachan* process and concept. As I have shown in Chapter 5, there have been changes and trends in *prachan piiphaat seephaa* in modern society including the transformation of musicians' relationships in terms of music schools and institutions, the contracted forms and formats of *prachan* compared to the standard one, and the trends in contemporary *prachan* through the notion of musical response using different pieces, the expansion of *prachan* pieces in each repertoire, the *thao* form, *hug phleeng* and *haang phleeng* pieces in performance, as well as the high-speed and the application of the *klong khaek* drums in competitions. Music technology and media have also had an enormous effect on *prachan* in modern society. Arguably, the framework of conceptual fighting and conflict in *prachan* has been shaped and developed through the development of music technology - such as microphones, amplifiers, and audio mixers – and digital social media such as YouTube. Evidently, these support the way in which musicians think about *prachan* and its influential factors in their rehearsals and performances. The striking feature of the development of *prachan* is that it represents the strong relationship between *prachan* and society, which are linked through the concept of changes and trends in relation to the contraction of time and space in modern Thai society (Chapter 6). This aspect of *prachan* has been the subject of considerable discussion among adept musicians in Thai music circles. During my fieldwork at

prachan performances from 2012-13 in Bangkok, I was surprised when *prachan* musicians and music masters told me that the *prachan piiphaat seephaa* in an event in which they performed was not a standard *prachan*, and tried to ascribe the historical *prachan* event called '*ngaan sii maseng*' in 2466/1923, and its standard musical format as a real *prachan.* It seems that most *piiphaat* musicians do not accept the reality of the changes in and development of *prachan* in Thai music circles at present. Intriguingly, they do not accept the form of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* that they have been performing in everyday life as real and claim that the form of past *prachan* is a perfect form and unchanged model. Paradoxically, the standard musical format of *prachan,* which musicians nowadays usually claim to be the form of actual *prachan,* does not exist in reality, but exists only in their imaginations.

There is no doubt that the ultimate point of *prachan* in this thesis is its reflection of Thai music and culture. It is my intention to point out the significant features of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* with the role of conceptual fighting and musical response as a fundamental concept and process of Thai music and culture. In Chapter 6, I revealed the core of *prachan* and conceptual fighting as part of the cultural construction representing a culture of 'spontaneous response and fighting' that functions around Thai music and society. The concept of spontaneous response and fighting as conflict can be shown to be at work in Thai plays, games or sports, and even the game of politics in people's everyday lives as a Thai cultural trait. Following Victor Turner's theory in 'From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play' (1982) regarding the representation of human life through performance, I highlight this notion of *prachan* performance and conceptual fighting as a musical conflict, revealing that 'conflict' is a central part of Thai music and culture and people's everyday lives in society. As mentioned above, I have shown the role of conceptual fighting in *prachan,* which can be generated and explained in terms of spontaneous response and fighting in relation to

the conflict in the social and cultural domains. This shows that, in fact, the notion of conceptual fighting, as musical response and conflict, is musically, socially, and culturally constructed and is embedded in Thai people's perception and everyday lives as part of Thai culture.

The most important point that I found in terms of *prachan* concept and process as well as its representation in Thai culture is that *prachan* is evidently the driver of musical creativity in Thai music. As stated in a previous chapter, *prachan* can be explained in terms of a development process and creativity in regard to Thai music and society through four models, including establishing social gatherings which creates a secular boundary; transmitting musical knowledge; provoking musical conflict; and creating a situation of no formal judgement in the competition. Following this aspect, I argue that *prachan* plays a key role in the development process of Thai music and society as a whole. However, the next question is, what would happen if there were no *prachan* or musical conflict in Thai musical society? I would say that, without the development process of *prachan* competitions, musical performance and knowledge would no longer be able to be developed. This would also affect the way in which musical knowledge is passed on from teacher to pupils, as discussed in Chapter 6. Secret knowledge and 'high level' musical pieces would not be easily passed on to pupils, since they would not have a platform where they could use their musical knowledge to respond to or fight each other musically to prove and protect their dignity. It might be said that the fundamental concept of Thai music performance generally depends on the concept of musical response through conceptual fighting. The striking point is that if we did not have *prachan*, the concept of conceptual fighting or 'musical conflict' could not function in Thai music, and this would result in undeveloped musical knowledge or a lack of musical creativity in Thai music as a whole. With this approach in mind, in *prachan*, musical conflict and musical creativity are inseparable. From this

point of view, we could say that music could not develop without musical conflict, since in practice conflict delivers musical creativity.

Lastly, in considering the idea of *prachan* as a process of musical creativity, I would like to clarify one characteristic of *prachan* by exploring the terms 'winner' and 'loser', which both have a powerful meaning for Thai musicians and music circles. One key feature of *prachan* that makes it conceptually different from other music competitions is the fact that there is no formal judgement nor declaration of a winner in the competition. As I mentioned in Chapter 6, I found that the reason that *prachan* creates this condition is to sustain the process of musical creativity. This is because, if *prachan* had a formal judgement with the declaration of a 'winner', that would end the competition between ensembles in the eyes of the public in Thai music circles due to the consequent pride or embarrassment. In contrast, in a competition without a formal judgement, depending on the indirect judgement by the audience, the musicians still have a chance to perform and improve their performance in a return match at the next *prachan* event or in the following events, since there is no formal judgement of a winner or loser in public. Therefore, by its very nature, *prachan* can be rearranged as a return match again and again. Hence, the conceptual fighting also develops each time the competition is re-run, as a boost to musical creativity. This is a substantial reason why the *prachan* process traditionally has not included a formal judgement, since that would demolish the process of musical response and musical creativity in Thai music and culture.

In this regard, as previously stated, we might raise the question of whether we really have an actual winner or loser in *prachan*, or how the term 'winner' relates to the concept of development in Thai music and society. The word 'winner' is apparently established, as a seductive apparatus, in *prachan* and musical society in order to encourage the concept of musical response, as conceptual fighting, to make the

competition more intense and powerful in Thai musical society. Apparently, it works efficiently as a way of activating and supporting the social gathering and musical creativity in *prachan*. This is because this word affects the status and dignity of musicians in Thai music circles as professional musicians or a great *prachan* ensemble, which in turn relates to the high-rate of employment and musicians' economic well-being. However, in practice, we know that this word does not exist in reality in *prachan*, since *prachan* evidently proceeds without a formal judgment in public. This *prachan* condition always provides a chance for music ensembles to have a return match again and again, to gain the accolade of 'winner', as a process of musical creativity. Arguably, even though the words 'winner' and 'loser' in *prachan,* in practice*,* do not exist in reality, they do exist in the musicians' and audience's imaginations as their own subjectivity in music preference, which brings them into the realm of the development process of conceptual fighting and musical creativity in *prachan*.

New Directions of the Research

I hope that this thesis has opened up several aspects of *prachan piiphaat seephaa* in relation to the understanding of Thai music and culture. I would say that to broaden this topic further and fulfil the understanding of *prachan* in Thai culture, it would be important to explore another two major types of *prachans*: *prachan piiphaat mon* and *prachan piiphaat naanghoong.* These two *prachans* accompany Thai funerals and could fulfil an understanding of the role of conceptual fighting in *prachan* and Thai culture. Arguably, broadening *prachan* musical knowledge in different contexts and concepts of Thai music would lead to different aspects and directions of *prachan* performance and Thai culture. The aspect of standardisation is one of the significant aspects of *prachan* music in modern Thai society. The power of institutions was mentioned in Chapter 5, and the official institutions have tried to establish a standard form of *prachan piiphaat*

seephaa, contributing to the process of standardisation by arranging an annual *prachan* competition. In the field of ethnomusicology, this topic apparently has been discussed broadly in regard to different cultures and aspects. It would be interesting to investigate the influences and policies of both official and public institutions towards Thai music and *prachan*, which would lead to the question of how the effects of standardisation have impacted the form and concept of *prachan* and Thai music, and whether the notion of standardisation will influence musical creativity in *prachan* and the way in which musicians and people of the next generation think about *prachan* in Thai music culture. Finally, we cannot deny that the exploration of the changes and trends of *prachan* relating to the development of Thai society and culture is viewed as one of the crucial aspects of this thesis. It is very challenging to investigate the relationships between *prachan* and social development in the future or in the next fifty years in regard to how the concept and process and trends of *prachan* will change and influence musicians' identity and way of life in the new age of Thai society. How will the growth/decline of globalization and social media in the new age shape the process of conceptual fighting and learning/teaching music in *prachan* and Thai music? I hope that these aspects can, in turn, disclose some other aspects of *prachan* identity and development in Thai music and culture, fulfilling a new facet of *prachan* and conceptual fighting as musical creativity.

Appendixes

Appendix I: Glossary of Thai Terms

chan Level or metrical level. It refers to the form of Thai music comprising different musical levels such as *saam chan*, *saung chan*, and *chan dieo.*

ching A pair of small cymbals.

diaw Solo repertoire or solo piece. Musicians usually use a piece from this category to challenge and show their musical proficiency in performance.

haang phleeng A small piece that musicians always play in *prachan* nowadays. It is mostly performed after the main piece (in *thao* form: *saam chan*, *saung chan*, and *chan dieo*) before ending with the *luukhmot*. They usually perform this type of piece in order to support the main *prachan* piece to meet their artistic satisfaction, in order to display certain things to entertain the audience and to show their musical creativity.

hoomroong The overture. In *prachan piiphaat seephaa*, the *hoomroong* is also perceived as the *hoomroong seephaa*. It can be separated into two parts comprising the *Rao Pralong Seephaa* and the *hoomroong*. *Prachan* musicians traditionally consider the *Rao Pralong Seephaa* an introduction in order to warm themselves up and check the readiness and quality of their musical instruments, while the *hoomroong* piece or the overture is viewed as the substance of the prelude before starting the next piece.

hua phleeng A small introductory piece that is performed before a main piece such as a piece from the *probkai* or *tayoe* repertoires in *prachan.*

khayii A musical technique of Thai musical performance. It is the way in which a performer improvises their melody on the main melody at double speed.

khruang saai A string ensemble comprising Thai two-stringed fiddles (*sau u, sau doung*), a fretted floor zither (*Jakhe*), a flute (*khlui*), a dulcimer (*khim*) and a rhythmic percussion instruments (*thoon-ramana, ching, etc*).

Khruu 'Teacher' or guru (Sanskrit).

klong khaek A pair of double-head drums.

khong wong yai Large gong circle.

khong wong lek Small gong circle.

khwaam hwai (or *hwai*) Showing a high speed in performance is the main aspect of responding to and representing the musical ability of each musical ensemble in *prachan* competitions.

khwaimuu A Thai *khong* circle musical technique that involves crossing the hands or arms to beat a *khong* (gong) to make different sounds. It is particularly used in solo pieces.

kwaat A musical technique of Thai melodic percussion such as the *ranaat eek* or *khong wong yai,* which uses the beater in the right hand to sweep the notes on the instrument in the right direction at the same time as the left hand plays a note that is in the octave of the last note of the right hand and then both hands play those two notes, in an octave, at the same time again.

kwaat thaang A *ranaat eek* musical technique, where the beaters are used in both hands to sweep the notes on the *ranaat eek* in the left and right directions at the same time.

Luang The royal rank of nobility below *Phra.*

luukhmot The ending section of a musical composition

luuk sit Pupils or students.

luuk thaw A type of melody based on a single note, commonly used in the *probkai* and *tayoe* repertoires.

naa phaat A musical repertoire comprising a large number of pieces used in various rituals (such as *wai khruu*) and also to accompany traditional performances such as masked dance drama (*khoon*), popular theatre (*likee),* and shadow theatre (*nangyai*). Traditionally performed by a *piiphaat* ensemble. *Naa phaat* pieces (*phleeng naa phaat*) are used to illustrate the actions of such characters in performance. They can be categorised into three levels: high(*soong*), middle(*klang*), and normal(*tammada*) in relation to the level or class of the deities and characters in the performance.

phleeng Musical piece.

phleeng laa Farewell piece (*phleeng* = musical piece, *la* = depart, goodbye).

phleeng phasaa A musical repertoire encompassing music that is composed or modified by certain musical styles and elements from foreign music. It is used to represent the foreign dialect or character in Thai music.

phleeng ruang A musical repertoire that is a form of suites of connected pieces without lyrics or a singing part. It is traditionally used to accompany rituals and ceremonies, and is played by a *piiphaat* ensemble.

Phra The royal rank of nobility below *Phraya.*

Phraya A high noble title above *Phra* and *Luang*, royally conferred.

pii chawa Small quadruple-reed shawm.

pii nai Quadruple-reed oboe.

piiphaat The type of player and ensemble that accompanies ritual and dance-drama. A *Piiphaat* ensemble generally comprises Thai wooden xylophones (*ranaat eek, ranaat thum*), gong circles (*khong wong yai, khong wong lek*), an oboe (*pii nai*) and rhythmic percussion instruments (such as *taphoon, klong khaek, saung naa, ching*, etc).

piiphaat seephaa A type of *piiphaat* music and ensemble that accompanies a *seephaa* chanter and singing by performing the *seephaa* repertoire. It is generally in the form of a *piiphaat seephaa khrung khoo* ensemble comprising a *pii nai* (quadruple-reed oboe), a *ranaat eek* (treble xylophone), a *ranaat thum* (bass xylophone), a *khong wong yai* (large gong circle), a *khong wong lek* (small gong circle), a *saung naa* (cylindrical double-headed drum), a *ching* (a pair of small cymbals), a *chaap* (a pair of flat cymbals), and a *krub* (a pair of hard wood sticks).

probkai A type of musical repertoire and rhythmic pattern in Thai music. Musicians generally call musical pieces that are from the *probkai* repertoire either *phleenge* (*prapeet*) or *naa thap probkai,* referring to the type of musical pieces, accompanied by the *probkai* rhythmic pattern.

ranaat eek Treble xylophone.

ranaat thum Bass xylophone.

rao A timbre technique where the beaters are used in both hands to play alternately on one note or different notes constantly.

samniang Characteristics of foreign dialects in Thai music. For instance, *samniang khaek*, *samniang farang*, *samniang phma*, and *samniang ciin* represent the characteristic of Indian, Western, Burmese, and Chinese dialects respectively in Thai music.

sabut A musical technique for Thai musical instruments to make grace notes.

saung naa Cylindrical double-headed drum used in a *piiphaat seephaa* ensemble.

seephaa A repertoire in musical recitation in which a singer accompanies her/himself with a set of *krub seephaa* or hand-held woodblocks. The most popular *seephaa* literature is *seephaa Khunchaang Khunphaen.* It is also viewed as a form of *seephaa* repertoire that is used for the *piiphaat* ensemble (called *piiphaat seephaa*) to accompany *seephaa* chanting and singing.

tayoe A type of musical repertoire and rhythmic pattern. The pieces in this category are made up of '*nua*' (a main melody that is fixed in length) in alternation with *'yoon*' (a melody that oscillates unequally around one note), melodies which are fundamentally accompanied by the *naa thap saung maai* or *saung maai* rhythmic pattern (sometimes musicians call the *naa thap tayoe* or *tayoe* rhythmic pattern).

thaang Musical style associated with an individual teacher or music school. However, in practice, it can be expanded into three different meanings: musical mode, individual improvisational style, and the performing character of a particular musical instrument.

thao A form of musical repertoire comprising melodies at three *chans* or metrical levels, including *saam chan*, *saung chan*, and *chan dieo.*

toe thon A *prachan* method in which all of the musical ensembles perform together in one piece, but in different sections or movements. Each ensemble normally chooses one movement from a piece of music and they are performed in sequence continuously.

wai khruu Thai teacher homage ceremony.

yown klade A way of showing a sophisticated performing method in solo in which a solo part or piece is arranged to be performed at different metrical levels: the *chan dieo*, the *saung chan* and then the *saam chan* level. Then, the procedure is reversed with the *saam chan*, the *saung chan*, and then the *chan dieo* metrical level.

Appendix II: Video Recordings Accompanying this Thesis

These videos were recorded in Bangkok and rural areas of Thailand between 2012-13, as part of my fieldwork on *prachan piiphaat seephaa*. I present them as examples of four significant *prachan* events, which I participated in and included in this thesis, comprising *prachan* Wat Phra Phireen, *prachan* Wat Sriprawat, *prachan* Ngaan Loy-Krathong Ratchaburi, as well as *prachan* 11th *Piiphaat Seephaa*-tii-Wang Naa. The video recordings accompanying this thesis correspond to musical pieces discussed in Chapter 2.

DVD Track List

Track 1 – An example of the Chau-Namsin's performance, introducing their ensemble with the *wai khruu* lyric and their new composition *Sroyphrasore* (*thao*) piece, page 58. Recorded 6/09/2012, at Wat Phra Phireen.

Track 2 – The Chaiyuth version of the *Phma Hae* (*thao*) piece by the Kamlai ensemble, page 63. Recorded 6/09/2012, at Wat Phra Phireen.

Track 3 – Yo, from the Kamlai ensemble, illustrated her musical competence by showing the *ranaat eek* technique *khayii* in the introduction of the *Phma Hae* piece, page 64. Recorded 6/09/2012, at Wat Phra Phireen.

Track 4 – The Kamlai ensemble performed a small solo piece on each instrument at the *chan dieo* metrical level, followed by the *haang phleeng* piece '*Phma Klongyaao*', page 64. Recorded 6/09/2012, at Wat Phra Phireen.

Track 5 – Yo, from the Kamlai ensemble, showed parts of a *Kraao Nai* solo piece on her *ranaat eek* with the performing method '*yown klade*' in the course of the *Tayoe Yuan* piece, page 66. Recorded 6/09/2012, at Wat Phra Phireen.

Track 6 – The *Tayoe Khameen* (*thao*) piece by the Sit-Reungnond, page 67. Recorded 6/09/2012, at Wat Phra Phireen.

Track 7 – The *Choet Ciin* piece by the Saue Banlengsin ensemble, page 67. Recorded 6/09/2012, at Wat Phra Phireen.

Track 8 – The Sit-Reungnond performed their *haang phleeng* piece with the main melody of the Thai pop folk song '*Yom Phraban Chaoka'*, in the course of the *Tayoe Khameen* piece, page 67. Recorded 6/09/2012, at Wat Phra Phireen.

Track 9 – 'Mike' (Sit-Reuangnond) played a *ranaat eek* solo piece '*Toi Ruup* '(*saam chan*), page 74. Recorded 6/09/2012, at Wat Phra Phireen.

Track 10 – 'Ton' (Saue Banlengsin) played a *ranaat eek* solo piece *Anu* (*thao*), page 74. Recorded 6/09/2012, at Wat Phra Phireen.

Track 11 – The Kunchaun Duriya ensemble performed a set of fighting pieces in the *haang phleeng* after performing the *Tayoe Yuan* piece during the *prachan*, page 85. Recorded 20/10/2012, at Wat Sriprawat.

Track 12 – An example of the '*Rao Pralong Seephaa*' with the overture '*Hoomroong Aiyareet*' by the Sit-Reungnond ensemble, page 90. Recorded 28/11/2012, at Ngaan Loy-Krathong Ratchaburi.

Track 13 – An example of the '*Rao Pralong Seephaa*' with the overture '*Hoomroong Chalongchai Thai-Banlaeng*' by the Thai Banlaeng ensemble, page 90. Recorded 28/11/2012, at Ngaan Loy-Krathong Ratchaburi.

Track 14 – The *haang phleeng* in the *phma* (Burmese) dialect after the main piece *Don Jaedii* (*thao*) by the Thai Banlaeng ensemble, page 93. Recorded 28/11/2012, at Ngaan Loy-Krathong Ratchaburi.

Track 15 – The *haang phleeng* with a set of fighting pieces after the main piece *Tayoe Nai* by the Sit-Reungnond ensemble, page 93. Recorded 28/11/2012, at Ngaan Loy-Krathong Ratchaburi.

Track 16 – An example of the *Hoomroong Aiyareet* piece (the forth movement) with a new arrangement and several techniques by the Royal Thai Air Force, page 100. Recorded 7/01/2013, at 11th *Piiphaat Seephaa*-tii-Wang Naa, Thai National Theatre.

Track 17 – An example of the *Tayoe Nauk* piece with the solo section of each instrument in the first movement, page 100. Recording 7/01/2013, at 11th *Piiphaat Seephaa*-tii-Wang Naa, Thai National Theatre.

Track 18 – An example of the *Tayoe Nauk* piece with the western dialect and a small entertaining song '*haag wa rao kamlung sabaai*' in the course of the third movement, page 100. Recording 7/01/2013, at 11th *Piiphaat Seephaa*-tii-Wang Naa, Thai National Theatre.

Track 19 – The *ranaat eek* solo in the *Khaek Mon* piece, by the Sergeant Major Montrii Klaaycham from the Royal Thai Police, page 101. Recording 7/01/2013, at 11th *Piiphaat Seephaa*-tii-Wang Naa, Thai National Theatre.

Track 20 – The *khong wong lek* solo in the *Khaek Mon* piece by Pilot Officer Teerapong Tongperm from the Royal Thai Air Force, page 102. Recording 7/01/2013, at 11th *Piiphaat Seephaa*-tii-Wang Naa, Thai National Theatre.

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